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HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

BY ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.
ADVOCATE.

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VOLUME THE EIGHTH.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH;
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CONTENTS OF VOLUME VIII.

CHAPTER LX.

DOMESTIC HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN FROM 1809 TO 1812.

Character of the Age of George the Third—Character of the English, French, and German Literature during that period—Character of George the Third—His Mental Alienation—Proceedings in Parliament on that Event—Arguments for and against Proceeding by a Bill or by Address—Ministers are Continued in Power—Negotiation with Lords Grey and Grenville in January 1812—Assassination of Mr Perceval—Causes which prevented the Return of the Whigs to Office—Characters of George the Fourth, Lord Liverpool, and Sir Francis Burdett—Committal of the latter to the Tower, and Riots on that event—General Commercial Distress in 1811—State of the English Criminal Law, and Character of Sir Samuel Romilly—Monetary Changes during 1809 and 1810—Bullion Report, and Debates upon it in the British Parliament—Character of Mr Huskisson, and Tendency of his Commercial System—Debates on the Orders in Council, and their Repeal—Character of Lord Brougham as a Statesman and an Orator—Debates in Parliament on the Continuance of the Spanish War—Budget of 1811 and 1812—Negotiation for an Exchange of Prisoners with France—Causes of its Failure—Expedition against Java, and Completion of the Destruction of the Colonial Possessions of France.—P. 1–143.

CHAPTER LXI.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CORTES—WAR IN SPAIN, JANUARY 1810—FEBRUARY 1812.

Proceedings in Spain for the Formation of the Cortes—Causes which led to its Extreme Democratic Character—Constitution of 1812—Vast Effects which it has had on the South of Europe, and in the New World—Wellington's Opinion of, and Predictions regarding, it—Negotiations between Napo-

leon and Joseph for the Partition of Spain—Forces of France in the Peninsula in Spring 1811—Commencement of the Siege of Cadiz, and Operations in Catalonia—Siege and Fall of Tortosa—Capture of Figueras by the Spaniards—Commencement of the Siege of Taragona—Long-continued and desperate Defence of the Besieged—It is carried by Assault—Blockade and Re-capture of Figueras by the Spaniards—Suchet's Advance into Valencia—Siege of Saguntum—Battle of Saguntum, and Fall of that Fortress—Attack on Valencia—Its Surrender with the whole Army of Blake—Reflections on Suchet's Campaigns.—P. 144-260.

CHAPTER LXII.

Campaign of Wellington on the Portuguese Frontier—1811.

First Siege of Badajoz—General Description of the relative Forces in the Peninsula at this period—Advantages which the English enjoyed—Immense Forces which were at the Disposal of the French General—Causes which led to their Want of Success against Wellington—The precarious and destitute Condition of the King—Jealousy of the Marshals against each other—Absurd Division of the Resources of the Country by Napoleon among his Marshals—Dreadful Severity of the French Military Decrees—General Spirit of Resistance which they produce throughout Spain—Wellington's Difficulties—Imbecility of the Regency at Lisbon, and of the Portuguese Authorities—Jealousy and Weakness of the Spanish Government—Extreme Difficulty of getting Supplies in specie from England—Battle of Albuera—Its great moral Results—Raising of the Siege of Badajoz by Wellington—Transfer of the Seat of War to the frontier of Beira—Operations in the East and North of Spain at this period—Wellington's Investment of Ciudad Rodrigo—Approach of the French Armies to raise the Siege—Retreat of Wellington, and Action of Elbodon—Both Armies go into Cantonments—Surprise of Gerard at Aroyos di Molinos—Defeat of the French at Tariffa—Important ultimate Effects of this Campaign.—P. 270-371.

CHAPTER LXIII.

First Invasion of Spain by Wellington—January to November 1812.

Siege and Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo—Siege of Badajoz—Dreadful Assault by which it is carried—Irruption of Marmont into Beira—Incorporation of Catalonia with the French Empire—Destruction of the Bridge of Almarez by General Hill—Advance of Wellington to Salamanca—Siege and Capture of the Forts there—Wellington advances to the Douro—Movements on both sides—Retreat of Wellington to Salamanca—Battle there, and total Defeat of Marshal Marmont—Advance of Wellington to Madrid—Raising of the Siege of Cadiz, and Evacuation of Andalusia by Marshal Soult—Wellington moves towards Burgos—Unsuccessful Assault of the Castle there—Retreat of Wellington and Hill to Salamanca—And thence to Ciudad Rodrigo—Severe

Losses sustained during the Retreat—Reflections on the great Results of this Campaign.—P. 372–512.

CHAPTER LXIV.

SKETCH OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE—WAR BETWEEN THE OTTOMANS AND RUSSIANS, FROM 1808 TO 1812.

Distinguishing Features of Oriental and European Civilisation—System of Oriental Government—Manners, Habits, Virtues and Vices of the East—Causes which have counteracted the manifold Evils of their Civil Institutions Physical Description, and Statistical Details of the Turkish Empire—Ottoman mode of carrying on War—And Natural Strength of their Frontier towards Russia—Dethronement and Death of Sultaun Selim—And Accession of Mustapha to the Throne at Constantinople—A Second Revolution, and Deposition of Mustapha—A Third Revolution, and Accession of Sultaun Mahmoud—Negotiations between the Russians and Turks in 1808—Campaign of 1809—And Annexation of Wallachia and Moldavia to the Russian Empire—Campaign of 1810, and Advance of the Russians to Schumla—Their Unsuccessful Operations before that Place—Siege of Roudschouck—Dreadful Repulse of the Assault on that Place—Battle of Battin, and Capture of the Turkish Camp—Capitulation of Roudschouck, and Conclusion of the Campaign—[illegible] half of the Russian Army from the Danube into Poland—Campaign of 1811 on the Danube—Battle of Roudschouck, and Evacuation of that Fortress by the Russians—Blockade of the Turkish Army near that Place—Its Surrender—Treaty of Bucharest—Character of Sultaun Mahmoud—And Reflections on the Possibility of Regenerating the Turkish Empire.—P. 513–*611.

CHAPTER LXV.

ELEVATION OF BERNADOTTE TO THE THRONE OF SWEDEN—AND CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND RUSSIA IN 1812.

Description of the Swedish Peninsula—Character and Institutions of the Swedes—Invasion of Finland by the Russians—Fall of Sweaborg—Dethronement of Gustavus, and Appointment of the Duke of Sudermania as his Successor—Renewal of the War with Russia—Disasters of the Swedes, and Peace with that Power—Character and Early History of Bernadotte—Continued Encroachments of Napoleon in the Centre of Europe—Commencement of the Differences between France and Russia—Mutual Grievances and Recriminations on both sides—Birth of the King of Rome—Tyrannical Conduct of Napoleon towards Sweden—Consequent Alienation of Bernadotte, and his Secret Treaty with Russia—Ultimatum of that Power towards France—Treaties between France, Prussia, and Austria—And Reflections on the Dreadful Contest that was approaching.—P. *612–*672.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Advance of Napoleon to Moscow, June—October 1812.

Immense Preparations of Napoleon for the Russian War—Forces which he had Collected for that Purpose—Forces of the Russians—Passage of the Niemen, and Commencement of the Campaign—Advance of Napoleon to Wilna, and Great Losses sustained by him in the March there—Operations of Napoleon against Bagrathion's Army—Operations of Wittgenstein on the Dwina—Retreat of Barclay de Tolly to the Dwina, and thence to Smolensko—Junction of the Russian Armies there—Battle of Smolensko, and Dreadful Losses of the French—Battle of Valentina—Continued Retreat of the Russians towards Moscow—Appointment of Kutusoff to the Supreme Command—Battle of Borodino, in which the Russians are worsted—Their continued Retreat to Moscow—Description of that Capital, and Preparations for Burning it—Conflagration of Moscow, and Effect it produced on the Russian Army.—P. 609–725.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Retreat from Moscow.

Reflections on the General Conquest of the Southern by Northern Nations—Admirable Position acquired by Kutusoff on the Road to Kaluga—Increasing Difficulties of the French at Moscow—Unsuccessful Attempt at a Negotiation with the Court of St Petersburg—Napoleon resolves to Retreat—Defeat of Murat at Winkowo—Commencement of the French Retreat, and Battle of Malo-Jaroslawitz—The French fall back on the Smolensko Road—Disasters of the Retreat, and Commencement of the Great Frosts—Arrival of the French at Smolensko—Parallel March of Kutusoff with the main Russian Army—Napoleon continues the Retreat from Smolensko—Operations of Wittgenstein on the Dwina—Storming of Polotsk—Arrival of Tchichagoff on the Beresina—Capture of Minsk and Bridge of Borissow—Battles at Krasnoi, and Immense Losses of the French—Imminent Danger of Napoleon as he approaches the Beresina—Arrival of Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff—Napoleon's admirable Plan of Passing the River—Dreadful Horrors of the Passage and Losses of the French—Departure of Napoleon for Paris—Increase of the Cold, and Destruction of the greater part of the French Army—Napoleon's Arrival at Wilna, and Interview with the Abbé de Pradt—Retreat of the French to the Niemen—Heroic Conduct of Marshal Ney—Generous Conduct of the Emperor Alexander at Wilna—Termination of the Campaign—And Reflections on it—Errors of the French in ascribing Napoleon's Disasters to the Burning of Moscow, or the Severity of the Cold—Real Causes of his Overthrow.—P. 726–834.

APPENDIX.—P. 835.

HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER LX.

DOMESTIC HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN FROM 1809 TO 1812.

ARGUMENT.

Vast Importance and Interest of the Reign of George the Third—Great Characters which were grouped around his Throne—Its Character, in Illustrious and Literary Men—Brilliant Character of the Period—Its Moral Features—Influence of the French Revolution on General Thought in France—Literature of Germany during the same period—Her Poets—Her Prose Writers—Public Duties to which George the Third was called—Consequences which would have ensued if his Character had been different—Character of this Monarch—His great Moral Courage and his Failings—Mental Alienation of the King in the end of 1810—Proceedings in Parliament on that event—Argument for Proceeding by Address on the part of the Opposition—Answer by the Ministers—Remarkable Sides taken on this occasion by the Whigs and Tories—Reflections on the Merits of this Question—The Prince Regent continues the Ministers in Power—Discontent which this gives to the Whig Party—Negotiation with Lords Grey and Grenville in January 1812—Whig Ministry proves abortive—Assassination of Mr Perceval—Trial and Execution of the Assassin—Renewal of the Negotiation with the Whigs—Difficulty respecting the Officers of the Household excludes them from Office—Reflections on this subject—Vital Interests at stake to Europe in this Negotiation—Results which would have followed if the Whigs had then attained the helm—Character of George the Fourth—His Private Disposition and Talents—His Frailties and Faults—Character of Lord Liverpool—His Merits, and Weaknesses and Errors—Restoration of the Duke of York to the Command of the Army—Character of Sir Francis Burdett—His Libel on the House of Commons—His Committal to the Tower, and consequent Riots—Reflections on this subject—General Distress of the Manufacturing Districts in 1811—And Causes to which it was owing—Commercial Relief afforded by Parliament—Origin and Progress of the Burdett Disturbances—They come to a head, and are suppressed—Character of Sir Samuel Romilly—Condition of the English Criminal Law at this Period—Results which had arisen from its Neglect—Principles for which Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh contended—Review of the Measures of Mr Pitt connected with the Currency—Monetary Changes during 1809 and 1810—Impression they produced on the Legislature—Argument

CHAP. LX.

1810.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

in favour of the Bullion Report by Mr Horner and Mr Huskisson—Argument against it by the Ministerial Party—Decision of the House of Commons on the subject, and Reflections on that determination—Ultimate and highly dangerous Effects which would have followed the Resumption of Cash Payments at that time—Errors of Mr Huskisson and his Party—Long Continuance of Public Delusion on the subject—Birth and Early History of Mr Huskisson—His Character and Great Abilities—His erroneous Political Principles, and their Destructive Effects—Debates on the Repeal of the Orders in Council—State of the Question, so far as Neutral Powers were concerned—Argument against the Orders in Council by Mr Brougham—Argument on the other side by the Ministers—Result of these Proceedings in Parliament—Reflections on this subject—Early Life of Lord Brougham—His Character as a Statesman—His Failings and Errors—His Character as an Orator—Argument of the Opposition against the Spanish War—Answer by Lord Wellesley and Lord Liverpool—Reflections on this Debate, and on the conduct of the Opposition on this subject—Their long-continued Insensibility to the Glory of England—Budget, and Naval and Military Forces of 1811—Budget, and Naval and Military Forces for 1812—Second Decennial Census of the People—Negotiation for an Exchange of Prisoners with France—Immense Accumulation of French Prisoners in Great Britain—Failure of the Negotiation—Was owing to Napoleon—Description and Vast Importance of Java—Expedition against the Island, and its Reduction—Storming of the Outworks of Fort Cornelius—Storming of the Lines of Fort Cornelius itself—Surrender of all Java—Reflections on the Total Destruction of the French Colonial Empire—Superiority of Colonial to European Conquest—Importance of the Preceding Domestic Detail of British Transactions.

Vast importance and interest of the reign of George III.

THE reign of George III. embraces, beyond all question, the most eventful and important period in the annals of mankind. Whether we regard the changes in society, and in the aspect of the world, which occurred during its continuance, or the illustrious men who arose in Great Britain and the adjoining states during its progress, it must ever form an era of unexampled interest. Its commencement was coeval with the glories of the Seven Years' War, and the formation, on a solid basis, of the vast colonial empire of Great Britain; its meridian witnessed the momentous conflict for American independence, and the growth, amidst Transatlantic wilds, of European civilisation; its latter days were involved in the heart-stirring conflicts of the French Revolution, and overshadowed by the military renown of Napoleon.

The transition from the opening of this reign to its termination, is not merely that from one century to the next, but from one age of the world to another. New elements of fearful activity were brought into operation in the moral world during its continuance, and new principles for the government of mankind established never again to be shaken. The civilisation of a new world, in this age, was contemporary with the establishment of new principles for the government of the old: in its eventful days were combined the growth of Grecian democracy with the passions of Roman ambition; the fervour of plebeian zeal with the pride of aristocratic power; the blood of Marius with the genius of Cæsar; the opening of a nobler hemisphere to the enterprise of Columbus, with the rise of a social agent as mighty as the press, in the powers of Steam.

Great characters which were grouped around the throne of George III.

But if new elements were called into action in the social world, of surpassing strength and energy, in the course of this memorable reign, still more remarkable were the characters which rose to eminence during its continuance. The military genius, unconquerable courage, and enduring constancy of Frederick; the ardent mind, burning eloquence, and lofty patriotism of Chatham; the incorruptible integrity, sagacious intellect, and philosophic spirit of Franklin; the disinterested virtue, prophetic wisdom, and imperturbable fortitude of Washington; the masculine understanding, feminine passions, and blood-stained ambition of Catharine, would alone have been sufficient to cast a radiance over any other age of the world. But bright as were the stars of its morning light, more brilliant still was the constellation which shone forth in its meridian splendour, or cast a glow over the twilight of its evening shades. Then were to be

CHAP. LX. 1810.

seen the rival genius of Pitt and Fox, which, emblematic of the antagonist powers which then convulsed mankind, shook the British senate by their vehemence, and roused the spirit destined erelong, for the dearest interests of humanity, to array the world in arms; then the great soul of Burke cast off the unworthy fetters of ambition or party, and, fraught with a giant's force and a prophet's wisdom, regained its destiny in the cause of mankind; then the arm of Nelson cast its thunderbolts on every shore, and preserved unscathed in the deep the ark of European freedom; and, ere his reign expired, the wisdom of Wellington had erected an impassable barrier to Gallic ambition, and said even to the deluge of Imperial power, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Nor were splendid genius, heroic virtue, gigantic wickedness, awanting on the opposite side of this heart-stirring conflict. Mirabeau had thrown over the morning of the French Revolution the brilliant but deceitful light of democratic genius; Danton had coloured its noontide glow with the passions and the energy of tribunitian power; Carnot had exhibited the combination, rare in a corrupted age, of republican energy with private virtue; Robespierre had darkened its evening days by the blood and agony of selfish ambition; Napoleon had risen like a meteor over its midnight darkness, dazzled the world by the brightness of his genius and the lustre of his deeds, and lured its votaries, by the deceitful blaze of glory, to perdition.

Its character in illustrious literary men.

In calmer pursuits, in the tranquil walks of science and literature, the same age was, beyond all others, fruitful in illustrious men. Dr Johnson, the strongest intellect and the most profound observer of the

eighteenth century; Gibbon, the architect of a bridge over the dark gulf which separates ancient from modern times, whose vivid genius has tinged with brilliant colours the greatest historical work in existence; Hume, whose simple but profound history will be coeval with the long and eventful thread of English story; Robertson, who first threw over the maze of human events the light of philosophic genius, and the spirit of enlightened reflection; Gray, whose burning thoughts have been condensed in words of more than classic beauty; Burns, whose lofty soul spread its own pathos and dignity over the "short and simple annals of the poor;" Smith, who called into existence a new science, fraught with the dearest interests of humanity, and nearly brought it to perfection in a single lifetime; Reid, who carried into the recesses of the human mind the torch of cool and sagacious enquiry; Stewart, who cast a luminous glance over the philosophy of mind, and warmed the inmost recesses of metaphysical enquiry by the delicacy of taste and the glow of eloquence; Watt, who added an unknown power to the resources of art, and in the regulated force of steam discovered the means of approximating the most distant parts of the earth, and spreading in the wilderness of nature the wonders of European enterprise and the blessings of Christian civilisation,—these formed some of the ornaments of the period during its earlier and more pacific times, for ever memorable in the annals of scientific acquisition and literary greatness. 1810.

But when the stormy day of revolution commenced, and the passions were excited by political convulsion, the human mind took a different direction; and these names, great as they are, were rivalled by others of a wider range and a bolder character. Scott then

CHAP. LX. 1810.

entranced the world by the creations of fancy; and, diving deep into the human heart, clothed alike the manners of chivalry and the simplicity of the cottage with the colours of poetry, the glow of patriotism, and the dignity of virtue: Byron burst the barriers of wealth and fashion; and, reviving in an artificial age the fire of passion, the thrill of excitement, and the charm of pathos, awakened in many a breast, long alive only to corrupted pleasures, the warmth of pity and the glow of admiration:* Campbell threw over the visions of hope and the fervour of philanthropy, the sublimity of poetic thought and the energy of lyrical expression; and, striking deep into the human heart, alone of all the poets of the age has, like Shakspeare and Milton, transplanted his own thought and expression into the ordinary language of the people: Southey, embracing the world in his grasp, arrayed the heroism of duty, and the constancy of virtue, with the magnificence of Eastern imagination and the strains of inspired poetry: while the sparkling genius of Moore, casting off the unworthy associations of its earlier years, fled back to its native regions of the sun, and blended the sentiment and elevation of the West with the charms of Oriental imagery and the brilliancy of Asiatic thought.

But the genius of these men, great and immortal as it was, did not arrive at the bottom of things: they shared in the animation of passing events, and were roused by the storm which shook the world; but they did not reach the secret caves whence the

* It is only, however, to his descriptions of nature, and a few of his reflections, that this high praise is due. Generally speaking, his sentiments and characters exhibit a chaos of ill-regulated passion, which never will be intelligible or interesting but to the spoiled children of fashion or self-indulgence—that is, a limited portion of mankind.

whirlwind issued, nor perceive what spirit had let loose the tempest upon the world. In the bosom of retirement, in the recesses of solitary thought, the awful source was discovered, and Æolus stood forth revealed in the original Antagonist Power of wickedness. The thought of Coleridge, even during the whirl of passing events, discovered their hidden springs, and poured forth in an obscure style, and to an unheeding age, the great moral truths which were then proclaiming in characters of fire to mankind: Wordsworth, profound and contemplative, clothed the lessons of wisdom in the simplicity of immortal verse: Mackintosh, rising, like Burke in maturer years, above the generous delusions of his yet inexperienced life, wanted only greater industry, and a happy exemption from London society, to have rivalled Thucydides in the depth of his views, and a biographer like Boswell, to have equalled Johnson in the fame of his conversation: while Chalmers, bringing to the cause of truth and the interests of humanity a prophet's fire and an orator's genius, discerned in the indifferent or irreligious spirit of the former age, the real cause of the dangers of the present; and in the spread of Christian instruction, and the prevalence of religious principle, the only power that ever has, or ever will, successfully combat, either in political or social evils, the seductions of passion, the delusions of error, and the powers of wickedness.

The French and German writers, justly proud of the literary fame of their own countries during this memorable reign, will hardly allow that their illustrious authors should be grouped around the throne of George III.; and will point rather to the Revolution, the empire of Napoleon, or the War of

CHAP. LX. 1810.

Independence, as marking the period on continental Europe. But by whatever name it is called, the era is the same; and if we detach ourselves for a moment from the rivalry of nations, and anticipate the time in future days when Europe is regarded by the rest of the world as a luminous spot, exceeding even Greece in lustre, and from whence the blessings of civilisation and the light of religion have spread over the globe, we shall feel reason to be astonished at the brightness of the constellation which then shone forth in the firmament. It is pleasing to dwell on the contemplation. Like the age of Pericles in Grecian, or of Augustus in Roman story, it will never again be equalled in European history; but the most distant ages will dwell upon it with rapture, and by its genius the remotest generations of mankind will be blessed.

Brilliant character of this period.

In no age of the world has the degrading effect of long-continued prosperity, and the regenerating influence of difficulty and suffering on human thought, been more clearly evinced. The latter part of the eighteenth century, the reign of Louis XV., the Regent Orleans, and Louis XVI., were characterised by a flood of selfishness and corruption, the sure forerunners in the annals of nations of external disaster or internal ruin. Fancy was applied only to give variety to the passions—genius to inflame, by the intermixture of sentiment, the seductions of the senses — talent to obscure the Creator from whom it sprung. The great powers of Voltaire, capable, as his tragedies demonstrate, of the most exalted as well as varied efforts, were perverted by the spirit of the age in which he lived. He wrote for individual celebrity, not eternal truth; and he obtained, in consequence, the natural reward

Its moral character.

of such conduct,—unbounded present fame, and, in some respects undeserved, permanent neglect.* The ardent and more elevated, but unsteady mind of Rousseau disdained such degrading bondage. The bow bent too far one way, recoiled too far another; and the votaries of fashion, in an artificial age and a corrupted capital, were amused by the eloquent declamations of the recluse of Meillerie on the pristine equality of mankind, the social contract, and the original dignity of the savage character. Raynal, deducing the principles of humanity from the wrong source, traced with persuasive fervour, but with no prophetic foresight, the establishments of the European in the two hemispheres; and, blind to the mighty change which they were destined to effect in the condition of the species, diffused those pernicious dogmas which have now blasted the happiness of the negro race both in the French and English colonies; and sought to deduce, from the commencement of the vast change destined to spread the Christian faith over the wilderness of nature, arguments against its celestial origin. Every department of thought, save one, was tainted by the general wickedness and blindness to all but present objects which prevailed. Man's connexion with his Maker was broken by the French apostles

* Every bookseller in France and England will now bear testimony to the fact, that there is no voluminous writer whose works remain so dead a stock as those of Voltaire; and this is decisively proved by the extremely low price which the numerous editions of his works bear. His tragedies are noble works, and will live for ever; but his romances have already descended to the vault of all the Capulets. His historical writings, compared with those in France which followed the Revolution, appear lifeless and uninteresting. His sceptical dogmas, so far from being regarded as the speculation of a powerful mind in advance, are now seen to have been the blindness of a deluded one, in rear of the momentous age to which his later years were prolonged.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

of freedom; for they declared there was no God, in whom to trust in the great struggle for liberty. "Human immortality," says Channing, "that truth which is the seed of all greatness, they derided. To their philosophy man was a creature of chance, a compound of matter, a worm soon to rot and perish for ever. France failed in her attempts for freedom, through the want of that moral preparation for liberty, without which the blessing cannot be secured. Liberty was tainted by their touch, polluted by their breath; and yet we trusted it was to rise in health and glory from their embrace."[1] In the exact sciences alone, dependent upon intellect only, the native dignity of the human mind was asserted; and the names of D'Alembert, La Grange, and La Place, will remain to the end of the world among those who, in the loftiest subjects of enquiry, have extended and enlarged the boundaries of knowledge.

[1] Character of Napoleon.

But more animating times were approaching fast: corruption had produced its inevitable fruits; and adversity, with its renovating influence, was about to pass over the moral world. The Revolution came with its disasters and its passions; its overthrow of thrones and destruction of altars; its woes, its blood, and its suffering. In the general deluge thus suddenly falling on a sinful world, the mass of mankind in all ranks still clung to their former vices. They were, as of old, marrying and giving in marriage, when the waters burst upon them. But the ark of salvation had been prepared by more than mortal hands. The handwriting on the wall was perceived by the gifted few to whom Providence had unlocked the fountains of original thought; and in the highest class of intellect was soon to be discerned the eleva-

Influence of the French Revolution on general thought in France.

ting influence of trial and suffering upon the human mind. While the innumerable votaries of Revolution, borne along on the fetid stream which had burst from the corruptions of previous manners, were bending before the altar of Reason, Chateaubriand ventured to raise again, amidst the sneers of an infidel age, the standard of ancient faith, and devoted the energies of an intrepid, and the genius of an ardent mind, to demonstrate its relation to all that is beautiful, or great and elevating, both in the moral and material world. Madame de Staël, albeit nursed in the atmosphere of philanthropic delusion, and bred up with filial piety at the feet of Gamaliel, arose, amidst the tears of humanity, to nobler principles; combined the refinements of sentiment with the warmth of eloquence and the delicacy of taste, and first announced, in a philosophic survey of human affairs, the all-important truth, that there are but two eras in the history of the species—that which preceded and that which followed the establishment of Christianity. Seeds, whether for good or evil, sown in the human mind, generally take half a century to bring their fruit to maturity; and in the general profligacy and irreligion of the urban population in France since the Revolution, is to be discerned the havoc prepared by the labours of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, and the long-continued corruption of previous literature. But the nobler fruits of the suffering of the Revolution are already apparent in the highest class of intellect, whence change whether for good or evil ever originates. Guizot has brought to the history of civilisation the light of true philosophy and the glow of enlightened religion: Cousin, in the midst of philanthropic labour and vast information on the vital question of education, has arrived at the eternal

1810.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

truth, that general instruction, if not based on Christian principle, is rather hurtful than beneficial, because it opens new avenues to moral corruption without providing the only antidote which experience has proved to be effectual in correcting it: Lamartine, gifted at once with an orator's fervour and a poet's fire, has traced in strains of almost redundant beauty the steps of an enlightened European pilgrim to the birthplace of our religion and the cradle of our race. May the seeds scattered by these illustrious men not fall on a barren soil and perish by the wayside, nor yet be choked amidst briers; but bring forth good fruit, in some fifty-fold, some eighty, and some an hundred! *

Literature of Germany during the same period.

Germany is a younger branch of the same illustrious family; but from the time that her language has been cultivated by native writers, she has advanced

* Sir James Mackintosh, thirty years ago, observed this remarkable change in French literature, and deplored that it had not then made its appearance amongst English writers.—"Twenty years ago," says he, "the state of opinion seemed to indicate an almost total destruction of religion in Europe. Ten years ago, the state of political events appeared to show a more advanced stage in the progress towards such a destruction. The reaction has begun every where. A mystical spirit prevails in Germany; a poetical religion is patronised by men of genius in France. It is adopted in some measure by Madame de Staël, who finds it, even by the help of her reason, in the nature of man, if she cannot so deeply perceive it in the nature of things. In England, no traces of this tendency are discoverable among men of letters,—perhaps because they never went so near the opposite extreme, *perhaps also because they have not suffered from the same misfortunes.*"—Mackintosh's *Memoirs*, I. 408. What a curious and instructive passage to be written thirty years ago, midway between the experience of the French and the commencement of the English Revolution! The days of anxiety, contest, and suffering, have come to England, from the effects of that very organic change in which Sir James Mackintosh himself, in his later days, from the spirit of party, against his better judgment, was led to concur; and with them, the resurrection of the religious spirit in the works of philosophy, literature, and philanthropy, of the want of which he then was led to complain.

in the great race of mind with extraordinary rapidity. Last of the European surface to be turned up by the labours of the husbandman, her soil has been found to teem with the richness of a virgin mould, and to exhibit the sparkling of hitherto untouched treasures. In reading the recent poets and great prose writers of that country, we feel as if we had arrived at a new mine of intellectual wealth: the northern nations, with fresh ideas and powerful expression, have again burst into the almost exhausted world of thought, and the long sway of Grecian or Roman dominion has been modified by a second infusion of Gothic energy. However it may be explained, the fact is sufficiently proved by the most cursory survey of the history of mankind, that the human mind is never quiescent: that it frequently lies fallow, as it were, for a long succession of ages; but that, during such periods, former error is forgotten, and ancient chains worn off: and that original thought is never so powerful, and important truth never so clearly revealed, as when the light of day is again let in to hitherto unexplored regions of the mind. The ages of Bacon and Shakspeare in England; of Machiavel and Leonardo da Vinci in Italy; of Pascal and Descartes in France, are sufficient to demonstrate the general justice of this principle.

Long illustrious in the walks of philosophy, holding for centuries a distinguished place in the republic of science; the birthplace of printing and gunpowder, the two most powerful agents in the cause of freedom ever communicated to mankind;* the country

* Of printing this will be generally admitted; of gunpowder, at present, as generally denied. This is not the place to demonstrate the proposition: the experience of a few generations will place it beyond a doubt.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

of Kepler and Copernicus, of Euler and Leibnitz, Germany had not till the last half century explored the riches of her own tongue, or developed in native literature the novel and fervent ideas which had long been working in her bosom. But this was at length done; and her literature started at once into life with the vigour of youthful energy, and the strength of an armed man. Klopstock, obscure but sublime, poured forth the spirit of mystical Christianity in touching and immortal strains: Goethe, simple yet profound, united the depth of philosophical thought to the simplicity of childish affection; and, striking with almost inspired felicity the chord of native reflection, produced that mingled flood of poetic meditation and individual observation, which has rendered his fame unbounded in the Fatherland. Wieland, without the religious fervour of the first of these writers, or the deep reflection of the second, has charmed every imagination by the brightness of his fancy, the richness of his language, and the sparkling freshness which he has thrown over all the subjects which his magic pencil has touched: Schiller, uniting the ardour of a soldier to the soul of a statesman and the graphic hand of an historian, has portrayed the shades of former times with dramatic power, and in a noble spirit; while the ardent soul of Körner, awakened by the trumpet of Germany's deliverance, has poured a hero's soul and a patriot's heart into lyric verse, which will endure as long as the memory of the struggle by which it was inspired.

Her poets.

Nor have the efforts of thought in the Fatherland been confined to poetic effusion: in the calmer walks of philosophy and literature, the vigour of the human mind has been equally conspicuous; and a new light has been already thrown, alike on present speculation,

Her prose writers.

and past events, by the mingled originality and perseverance of the German character. Niebuhr, uniting to the prodigious industry of the German scholar an instinctive sagacity in discerning truth and apprehending the real springs and state of far distant events, which is perhaps unrivalled, has thrown a new and important light on the earlier periods of Roman annals; and though his history, generally obscure, sometimes perplexed, and too often overloaded with insignificant details, can never rival in general popularity the heart-stirring legends to which the page of Livy has given immortality, yet his profound observation and marvellous penetration have rendered his work the most valuable contribution to the stock of ancient knowledge which modern times have produced. Heeren, not perhaps with equal learning or knowledge, has thrown a clearer if not a more original light over the general history of ancient nations; and demonstrated how much remains still to be done on subjects apparently exhausted by previous industry, when the vigour of real talent and the force of an original mind are applied to its elucidation. The peculiar turn of the German intellect, abstract, contemplative, and often visionary, appears in the writings of Kant; and the reader, in toiling through his obscure pages, cannot but feel both how many new ideas have been poured into the world of thought by the Gothic race, and how much their importance has been diminished by being turned into the realms of ideal contemplation, instead of being devoted to objects of real usefulness.

Perhaps future ages, in comparing the philosophy and literature of England with that of Germany and France, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, will regret that the first has, especially in later

CHAP. LX. 1810.

times, so exclusively devoted its energies to objects of physical utility, practical importance, or ephemeral amusement, to the neglect of those higher and more lasting purposes which spring from the elevation of national feeling and the purity of national thought: that the direction of the second, cramped by the despotic nature of almost all the governments in the empire, has been so strongly directed to abstract speculation, imaginary feeling, or visionary perfection, to the neglect of those more heart-stirring and momentous topics which bear directly on the well-being of society, or the amelioration of the human race: and that the genius of the last, still perverted, save in a few gifted spirits, by the sins and depravity of the Revolution, has been so much lost in the wildness of extravagant fancy, or blinded by the passions of disappointed ambition. And, if we could conceive an era in which the freshness of German thought and the power of German expression, united to the acuteness of French observation and the clearness of French arrangement, were directed by the solidity of English judgment and the sway of English religion, it would probably be the brightest which has ever yet dawned upon the human race.

Public duties to which Geo. III. was called.

Inferior to many, perhaps all the illustrious men whose names have been mentioned, in intellectual power or literary acquisition, GEORGE III. will yield to none in the importance of the duties to which he was called, or the enduring benefits which he conferred upon the human race. His it was to moderate the fervour which burst forth in the world; to restrain within due bounds the sacred fire which was to regenerate mankind, and prevent the expansive power destined to spread through the wilderness of nature the power of European art, and the bless-

ings of Christian civilisation, from being wasted in pernicious attempts, or converted into the frightful sources of explosion and ruin. Vain are all the forces bequeathed to man, if the means of governing them are not at the same time bestowed. The power of steam was known for six thousand years, but it was applied to no useful purpose till the genius of Watt discovered the secret of regulating it; the force of the wind produces only shipwreck and devastation, if the steady hand of the pilot is awanting to direct the impulse which it communicates to the vessel. It was the fate of George III. to be called to the throne of the only free empire in existence during the age of revolutions; to be destined to govern the vast and unwieldy fabric of the British dominions, when torn at one period by internal convulsion, and menaced at another by external subjugation; to be doomed to combat, from the commencement to the end of a reign extending over more than half a century, the revolutionary spirit, veiled at one period under the guise of liberality and philanthropy, flaming at another with the passions and the terrors of a burning world.

Of the incalculable importance of directing the government of such a country at such a period, with the steady hand of patriotic wisdom, we may form some estimate from observing what had been the consequences of the bursting forth of similar passions at the same time, in other states, where a corresponding regulating power was wanting, and where democracy, through the infatuation of the higher orders, and the delusion of the throne, obtained an early and a lasting triumph. France exhibited the prodigy of a monarch yielding to the wishes, and a nobility impregnated from the very first with the

Consequences which would have ensued if his character had been different.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

passions, of the people; and in the horrors of the Revolution, the devastation and subjugation of Europe, and the general ultimate extinction of all moral principle, and every element of freedom within its bounds, is to be found an awful example of the consequences of admitting such a power unrestrained to act on human affairs. Republican feelings, sobered by English habits, and directed by English principle, gained a glorious triumph in America; and the fabric of Transatlantic independence was laid with a moderation and wisdom unparalleled in the previous annals of the world: but subsequent events have given no countenance to the belief that such institutions can, in a lasting manner, confer the blessings of freedom on mankind; and rather suggested the painful doubt, whether the sway of a numerical majority, at once tyrannical at home and weak abroad, may not become productive of intrigues more general, and insecurity as fatal, as the worst oppression of despotic states. Placed midway between these two great examples of democratic triumph, England still exhibits, though with diminished lustre, the rare combination of popular energy with aristocratic foresight. She is neither trampled under the hoofs of a tyrant majority, nor crushed by the weight of military power; her youth have not been mowed down by the scythe of revolutionary ambition, nor her renown tarnished, save of late years, by the vacillation of multitudinous rule. Gratefully acknowledging the influence in the continuance of those blessings, which is to be ascribed to the prevalence of religious feeling, the moderation of general opinion, and the habits of a free constitution, it would be unjust not to give its due weight to the personal character of the monarch who swayed the

English sceptre when the conflagration burst forth, and the advisers whom it led him to place about the throne. And if any doubt could exist on the subject, we have only to look to 1831, and reflect what would have been the fate of the cause of freedom throughout the world, if, when France was convulsed by the passions of Jacobin ambition, England had been blinded by the delusion of the Reform mania, and surrendered to the guidance of a conceding monarch, a reckless ministry, and an insane people.

Character of Geo. III.

Although neither the intellectual powers nor mental cultivation of George III. were of a very high order, yet no monarch was ever better adapted for the arduous and momentous duty to which he was called, or possessed qualities more peculiarly fitted for the difficulties with which, during his long reign, he had to contend. Born and bred in England, he gloried, as he himself said, in the name of Briton. Educated in the principles of the Protestant religion, he looked to their maintenance not only as his first duty, but as the only safeguard of his throne. Simple in his habits, moderate in his desires, unostentatious in his tastes, he preferred, amidst the seductions of a palace, the purity and virtues of domestic life. His education had been neglected—his information was not extensive—his views on some subjects limited; but he possessed, in a very high degree, that native sagacity and just discrimination, for the want of which no intellectual cultivation can afford any compensation, and which are so often found more than adequate to supply the place of the most brilliant and even solid acquisitions. He inherited from his father the hereditary courage and firmness of his race. On repeated occasions,

CHAP. LX. 1810.

when his life was attempted, he evinced a rare personal intrepidity; and when he proposed, during the dreadful riots of 1780, to ride at the head of his guards into the midst of the fires of his capital, he did no more than what his simple heart told him was his duty, but what, nevertheless, bespoke the monarch fitted to quench the conflagration of the world. Though quick in conversation, as kings generally are, he could not be said to have an acute mind; and yet the native strength of his intellect enabled him to detect at once any sophistry which interfered with the just sense he always entertained of his public or religious duties. When Mr Dundas, in the course of conversation on the Catholic claims, previous to Mr Pitt's retirement on that ground in 1800, urged the often repeated argument, that the Coronation oath was taken by him only in relation to his executive duties, he at once replied, "Come, come, Mr Dundas, let us have none of your Scotch metaphysics."

His great moral courage and his failings.

But his firmness and principle were of a more exalted cast than what arises from mere physical resolution. No man possessed moral determination in a higher degree, or was more willing, when he felt he was right, to take his full share of the responsibility consequent upon either supporting or resisting any measure of importance. The firmness which he exhibited on occasion of the run upon the Bank and the mutiny of the Nore, in 1797, brought the nation safely through the most dangerous crisis of recent times. His inflexible determination, in 1807, to admit no compromise with the Catholics regarding the Coronation oath, averted for twenty years that loosening of the constitution in Church and State, under which the nation has

since so grievously laboured. When resisting, almost alone, Mr Fox's India bill in 1783, he expressed his determination rather to resign his crown, and retire to Hanover, than permit it to become a law; and the result has proved both that he had correctly scanned on that occasion the feelings of the English people, and rightly appreciated the probable effect of the proposed measure on our eastern empire, and the balance of the constitution in this country. He was obstinate, and sometimes vindictive in his temper, tenacious of power, and contrived, throughout his whole reign, to retain in his own hands a larger share of real authority than usually falls to the lot of sovereigns in constitutional monarchies. But he had nothing permanently cruel or oppressive in his disposition; he freely forgave those who had attempted his life; and stood forth, on every occasion, the warm supporter of all measures having a humane or beneficent tendency. This inflexible disposition however, sometimes betrayed him into undue obstinacy; and his well-known determination to admit no accommodation with the American insurgents, prolonged that unhappy contest for years after even his own ministers had become aware that it was hopeless: yet even such a resolution had something magnanimous in its character. It is now well known, that, but for the incapacity of the generals in command of his armies, his firmness would have been rewarded with success; and all must admit, that his first words to the American minister who came to his court after the peace,—"I was the last man in my dominions to acknowledge your independence; but I will be the first to support it, now that it has been granted,"—were worthy of the sovereign of a great empire, whose moral resolution misfor-

CHAP. LX.

tune could not subdue, and whose sense of honour prosperity could not weaken.

1810. Selecting, out of the innumerable arts which flourished in his dominions, that on which all others were dependent, he concentrated the rays of royal favour on the simple labours of the husbandman. Equalling Henry IV. in the benevolence of his wish,* and outstripping both him and his own age in the justice of his discrimination, he said that he hoped to live to see the day, not when all his subjects could merely read, but "when every man in his dominions should have *his Bible* in his pocket." Like all men in high situations, during a period of popular excitement, of a really upright and conscientious character, he was, for a considerable period of his reign, the object of general obloquy; and to such a length was this carried, that open attempts to assassinate him were repeatedly made when he appeared in public; but he long survived, as real virtue generally does, this transient injustice. When a jubilee was appointed in the year 1809, for the fiftieth year of his reign, the nation unanimously joined in it with thankfulness and devotion; and the more advanced of the present generation still look back to the manly and disinterested loyalty with which, in their youth, the 4th of June† was celebrated by all classes with a feeling of interest, increased by the mournful reflection, that, amidst the selfish ambition and democratic infatuation of subsequent times, such feelings, in this country at least, must be numbered among the things that have been.

The reign of the venerable monarch, however,

* That he might live to see the day when all his subjects had their fowl in the pot.

† The birthday of George III.

who had awakened these feelings of loyalty among his subjects, was now drawing to a close. The health of the Princess Amelia, his favourite daughter, had long been declining, and she breathed her last after a protracted illness, which she bore with exemplary resignation, on the 2d November 1810. The anguish which the King underwent on this occasion was such, that it produced a return of the alarming mental malady which in 1788 had thrown the nation into such universal grief. Parliament met on the 1st November, in consequence of the Monarch's inability to sign any further prorogation; but, as the alarming indisposition of his majesty had for some time been a matter of notoriety, it was deemed advisable to adjourn from time to time, in the hope which was for some time held out of a speedy recovery. These hopes, however, having at length vanished, and the mental aberration of the monarch having assumed a fixed character, it became necessary to apply to Parliament on the subject; and on the 20th December, Mr Perceval brought forward the subject in the House of Commons.[1]

Mental alienation of the King in the close of 1810. Nov. 2, 1810.

Dec. 20, 1810.

[1] Ann. Reg. 1811, p. 11. Proceedings in Parliament on that event.

The basis of the proposition was the resolutions which were the groundwork of Mr Pitt's Regency bill, concerning which there was so vehement a debate in 1788; and they were as follows:—1. That the King, being prevented by indisposition from attending to the public business, the personal exercise of the royal authority has been suspended; 2. That it is the right and duty of Parliament, as representing all the estates of the people of the realm, to provide the means of supplying the defect in such a manner as the exigency of the case may seem to them to require; 3. That for this purpose the Lords and Commons should determine in what manner the royal

CHAP. LX. 1811.

assent should be given to bills which had passed both Houses of Parliament, and how the exercise of the powers and authorities of the Crown should be put in force during the continuance of the king's indisposition. The great feature of all these resolutions was, that they were a proceeding by *bill*, and not by address; and although such a course involved the anomalous absurdity of the royal assent being held to be validly interposed by commission, under the authority of Parliament, to a bill for regulating the royal functions, and settling the party by whom they should be exercised, at a time when the royal person was incapable of adhibiting such consent; yet such an assumption of power by Parliament was thought no unwarrantable stretch in such circumstances, when the Legislature was *de facto* resolved into two of its elements, and yet the actual existence of the monarch precluded the heir-apparent from ascending the throne by hereditary succession. It was intimated, at the same time, that it was the intention of Government to bring forward a bill, vesting all the powers of the Crown in the Prince of Wales, to administer the affairs of the country in the name and on the behalf of his Majesty, under no other restriction except such securities for the safety and comfort of the royal person, and the easy resumption of his authority in the event of recovery, as might appear necessary, and a certain restriction for a limited time of the prerogative of creating peers. These propositions were the subject of anxious debate in the two Houses of Parliament, and the arguments advanced on both sides are worthy of notice even in an European history, as involving the fundamental principles on which constitutional monarchy are rested. The first proposition passed unanimously; the second,

declaring the right of Parliament to supply the defect, did the like, with the single dissentient voice of Sir Francis Burdett; but upon the third, which declared that Parliament should proceed by bill to fix the person who was to exercise the royal authority, the Opposition took their stand. An amendment, that an address should be presented to the Prince of Wales praying him to take upon himself the royal functions, was proposed by Mr Ponsonby, and on it the main debate took place.[1]

CHAP. LX. 1811.

[1] Parl. Deb. xviii. 242, 247, 267. Ann. Reg. 1811, p. 1.

On the part of the Opposition, it was urged by Mr Ponsonby, Sir Samuel Romilly, and Earl Grey: —"The case which at present calls for the interposition of Parliament, is the absence of the kingly power; and that not owing to his abdication or the failure of heirs, but the incapacity of the existing monarch to execute the duties of the royal office. In dealing with so delicate a matter, one bordering so closely on the very foundations of government, it is of the last importance to adhere to the rules established by former precedent, and, in the absence of positive enactment, proceed in the paths of ancient usage. What, then, in similar circumstances, have our ancestors done? At the Restoration in 1661, the basis of the whole change was the letter and declaration of Charles II. from Breda; and this declaration, with the letter from the king which accompanied it, was delivered on the 25th April; and between that and the 29th of May, when the Restoration took place, an application was made from the Commons to the Lords to put the Great Seal in activity, as, without it, the proceedings of the courts of law were stopped; but this the House of Peers declined, and the Commons, sensible that their application was absurd and unconstitutional,

Argument for proceeding by address on the part of the Opposition.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

gave up the proposition. Again, at the Revolution, when James II. had left the country, and the throne was thereby vacant, what did Parliament do? Did they proceed by bill to settle the person who was to succeed to the crown, and go through the farce of affixing the Great Seal to an act when there was no sovereign on the throne? No. Even in that extreme case, when the liberties and religion of the whole nation were at stake, and constitutional principles were so well understood from the recent discussion they had undergone, during the great Rebellion and at the Restoration, they never dreamt of such an anomaly, but contented themselves with simply addressing the Prince of Orange to call a Parliament, and, when it assembled, they read the great compact between king and people, the Bill of Rights, and immediately proclaimed William and Mary King and Queen of Great Britain. If proceeding by address was the proper course in the greater cause and on the greater emergency, it must be considered sufficient in the lesser.

"With regard to the proceeding by bill, its absurdity is so manifest, that the only surprising thing is, how it ever could have been thought of. It is matter of universal notoriety, that every bill must have the royal assent before it becomes law; and, if that is the case in ordinary instances, how much more must it hold in that most momentous of all legislative enactments, the succession of the crown. Now, by 33d of Henry VIII., the royal assent must be given by the King personally in Parliament, or by commissioners appointed by letters-patent under the royal sign-manual. Is his Majesty at present capable of giving his consent in either of these ways? Confessedly not; and if so, then the proposed bill,

though it may have passed both Houses of Parliament must ever want the authority of law. On what pretence, then, can we assume to do by fiction, and by an artificial and operose proceeding, what, in point of fact, is universally known to be impossible? Other precedents in older times, still more precisely in point, might be quoted; but these considerations seem so decisive of the matter at issue, as to render their examination unnecessary.

"It may be conceded that the two Houses of Parliament, and they alone, have the right to supply a deficiency, whether temporary or permanent, in the executive; but the question is, what is the proper and constitutional form for them to proceed on on the occasion? It is just as possible to tell the heir-apparent what restrictions are to be imposed to his authority, in the address which calls upon him to exercise the functions of royalty, as in the bill which confers its powers upon him. If it is deemed advisable to place the custody of the Monarch in the hands of the Queen, and to give her majesty the appointment of the great officers of his household, as well as the power of taking the initiative in restoring him to the throne upon his convalescence, is it to be presumed that the Prince Regent, even when he had assumed the powers of royalty, in consequence of the address of the two Houses, would refuse his concurrence to such an arrangement? It is true, in this way the limitations which Parliament may deem necessary upon his authority, may not form fundamental parts of the Regent's authority; but you have just the same security that he will assent to them as to any other bill which has passed both Houses, as to which there is no instance of a rejection since the Revolution. It is no answer to

CHAP. LX. 1811.

these objections to say, the same thing was done in 1788, and that precedent should now be followed. The times, the circumstances of the empire, were essentially different in the two cases: then the chief danger apprehended was from the royal prerogative; now a crippled executive is the greatest calamity which the country, beset with dangers, could encounter." [1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xviii. 267, 279.

Answer by the Ministers.

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Canning, Mr Perceval, and Lord Castlereagh:—"Not the right and power of Parliament to supply the present defect; but the mode of exercising it, is in question. That great and serious difficulties lie in the way of either of these methods, may at once be admitted; but the question is, not whether either mode of proceeding is unexceptionable, but to which the least objections can be stated. It is no fault of ours that we are placed in a situation at once painful and perplexing: our duty is to deal with these difficulties in the most legal and constitutional manner of which existing circumstances will admit. To object to either of the methods of proceeding by bill or address, its own inherent difficulties and embarrassments, is only to say, in other words, that we are placed in a situation in the highest degree perplexing. That, however, is not our own act, but that of Providence, and we must deal with it as our ancestors have done. Every catastrophe which suspends or dissolves the hereditary succession to the throne, is necessarily involved in such difficulties; the only point for consideration is, what is the best mode of getting out of them?

"Now, what precedent does former usage afford to guide us in such perplexities? The example of the Restoration cannot with any propriety be referred

to on this question; because then an exiled monarch was to be restored to a right of which he had been forcibly and unjustly deprived, and an acknowledged title to be simply proclaimed and re-established. Can this be affirmed to be the predicament in which we stand at this moment? Unquestionably not; for we have now no pre-existing right to declare, but a contingency unforeseen by the existing law to provide for. Then, as to the precedent of the Revolution, splendid and cheering as the recollection of that great event must always be to Englishmen, it will be wise in Parliament, before they permit their feelings to be carried away by it, to consider well whether it has any application to the circumstances in which we are now placed. Was the object of Parliament, at that period, to provide for the care and custody of the person of the monarch? Was it to provide for his return to the government of the country upon his restoration to health? Was it to erect a temporary sovereignty during the incapacity of the monarch, who, it was hoped, would soon be restored to health? Was it not, on the contrary, to provide *against* the restoration of James; to erect a barrier against his return, and defend the Crown, which they proposed to transfer, against the hostile approach of its ancient possessor?

"The argument, founded upon the incompetency of applying the Great Seal to an act of parliament during the incapacity of the sovereign, is founded on no logical principle. Admitting that a fiction of law is adopted—an irregular and absurd proceeding, if you will, carried on when two branches of the legislature authorize the symbol of the consent of the third to be affixed to their bill without its knowledge or consent—does not this arise necessarily from the melan-

CHAP. LX. 1811.

choly event which for a time has resolved Government into two of its elements, and compelled them to provide themselves for the public service with the presumed or feigned consent of the third only? It is surely a singular remedy for the unfortunate incapacity of one branch of the Constitution, to proceed unnecessarily to incapacitate the remaining branches. The proceedings at the time of the Revolution were wise, just, and necessary, because there was no other mode of proceeding practicable at that period, when Government was dissolved, and no legislative measure, even in the most informal style, could be adopted; but, because such a proceeding was proper then, does it follow that the same precedent should be followed now, when no such necessity exists? And is not the proposal to do so, in the forcible language of Mr Burke, 'to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread?'

"We have now a Parliament full, free, and so constituted as to be fully competent to provide for the exigency that exists. What analogy is there between such a situation, and that at the Revolution, when the very convocation of a Parliament was the first step to be taken, and that could only be done by address to the Prince of Orange? Admitting the absurdity of applying the Great Seal, in the king's name, to a bill which has passed both Houses, when there is no sovereign on the throne, the same difficulty exists in as great a degree to the whole proceedings of the Regency during the king's life, which, contrary to the fact, speak in the king's name, and profess to utter his will. The question of a regency, it is historically known, was discussed at the Revolution, and rejected as unsuitable to the circumstances which then existed; and this renders

that precedent directly hostile to the proceeding by address in the present instance. So standing the older precedents, and such being the equal balance of difficulties, or incompetencies, on either side, what remains for us but to act upon the latest and most important authority, that of Parliament on the King's illness in 1788, which was adopted after the fullest discussion, in circumstances precisely parallel to the present, and with the assistance of all the light to be derived from the greatest constitutional lawyers and statesmen who ever adorned the British Senate?"[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xviii. 280, 291.

Upon this debate, Parliament, by a large majority in both houses, supported the resolutions proposed by ministers, that is, the proceeding by bill; the numbers being in the Commons 269 to 157; in the Lords 100 to 74.[2]

[2] Parl. Deb. xviii. 329, 460. Ann. Reg. 1811, p. 1.

The details of the Regency bill were afterwards brought forward, and discussed with great spirit and minuteness in committees of both Houses of Parliament. Most of the clauses were adopted with no other than verbal alterations; but a protracted debate took place on the clause which proposed to lay the Regent for twelve months under certain restrictions, especially in the royal prerogative of creating peers, or calling the eldest sons of peers to the Upper House by writ. These restrictions, however, for that period, were inserted in the bill, by a majority in the Lower House of 24; the numbers being 224 to 200—a majority which fell on the matter of the limitation as to creating peers, to 16 in the Commons, and in the Lords to 6. This rapid diminution of the ministerial majority clearly indicated what an insecure tenure ministers now had of their places, and how strongly the now confirmed malady of the Sovereign, and the known partiality of the

Dec. 31, 1810.

CHAP. LX. 1811. Prince of Wales for the Whig party, had come to influence that numerous party in Parliament—the waverers—in the line of policy they thought expedient to adopt. The Queen, by the bill, had the appointment of all the offices connected with the King's household; and certain forms were prescribed in which she was to take the initiative for paving the way for his restoration to power in the event of his convalescence. But in the all-important matter of the appointment of a ministry, the Regent was invested, without any restriction, with the whole Royal prerogative; and it was universally thought that the first use he would make of his newly acquired power would be to dismiss the present ministers, and call Lords Grey and Grenville to the head of his councils. Thus modified, the bill appointing the Regent passed the House of Lords on the 29th January; by a majority, however, only of eight; and on the 6th February the Royal assent was given by commission, and the Great Seal, the object of so much contention, affixed to the bill, upon which the Prince of Wales immediately entered on the whole functions of royalty, by the title of the Prince Regent.[1]

Jan. 29.

Feb. 6.

[1] Parl. Deb. xviii. 1084. 1140.

Remarkable sides taken on this occasion by the Whigs and Tories.

On calmly considering the subject of this vehement contention and narrow division in both Houses of Parliament, it cannot but strike the most inconsiderate observer how remarkable it was that the two great parties who divided the state, took upon this conditional question sides diametrically opposite to what might have been expected from their previous principles—the Whigs supporting now, as in 1788, the doctrine of the hereditary inherent right of the heir-apparent to the regency, during a contingency not provided for by the Act of Settlement or constitu-

tion, and the Tories exerting all their efforts, equally as in the days of Mr Pitt, to negative the heir-apparent's claim *de jure* to the Regency, and to confer it on him by Act of Parliament only, and under such restrictions as to the two Houses of the Legislature might seem expedient. A memorable instance of how much, even in the brightest days of national history, the greatest men in public life are influenced by considerations of interest to themselves or their party, in preference to adherence to the political principles which they profess; and of the ease with which the most conscientious intellects are insensibly brought round by the still small voice of private advantage or public ambition.

Reflections on the merits of the question.

But if the merits of the arguments adduced on both sides on this occasion are considered, without reference to the objects of present advantage which either party had at heart, no doubt can be entertained that the Whigs, both in reason and on precedent, had the best of the dispute. Admitting that the constitution, as it at present exists, was originally formed by an exertion of the national will, in opposition to or in constraint of the views of the reigning monarch, still no one can doubt that the occasions on which reference is to be made to Parliament to appoint the supreme executive magistrate, are extreme ones, and that recourse is not to be had to that *ultimum remedium* except in cases where no other mode of solving the difficulty and carrying on the government can be discovered. In Mr Burke's words, to act otherwise would be to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread. An event so little contrary to the ordinary course of events, that it unhappily occurred twice during the life of the same monarch,—viz. the insanity or utter incapacity of the reigning sovereign,

CHAP. LX. 1812.

—can hardly be said to be an extreme case, unprovided for by the constitution, which calls for a recurrence to first principles, and warrants two branches of the legislature in disposing of the third and the executive magistracy. The right of hereditary succession—the fundamental principle of the monarchy—interfered with to the smallest possible extent at the Revolution, and then recognised *de futuro* on the firmest basis, clearly points out the mode of solving the difficulty. The heir-apparent, if of competent age to undertake the government—if not, the party entitled by law to the regency on his minority—is the person to whom the interim duty of conducting the executive devolves, leaving it to Parliament to make what provision they please for the custody of the person of the fatuous monarch.

The Prince Regent continues the Ministers in power. Feb. 12.

The result which followed this interesting discussion in both Houses of Parliament was such as was little anticipated, and which, if foreseen, might possibly have inverted the sides which the Ministerial party and Opposition respectively took upon its merits. From the connexion which, during his whole life, had subsisted between the Prince of Wales and the Whig party, and the close personal intimacy in which he had long lived with its principal leaders, it was universally expected that his first act, upon being elevated to the office of Prince Regent, would have been to have sent for Lords Grey and Grenville, and intrusted them with the formation of a new administration. In fact, the anticipation of this had, towards the close of the year 1810, sensibly weakened the Ministerial majority in both Houses of Parliament; and, by inspiring Government with the belief that their tenure of office was drawing to a close, and that an opposite system would immediately

be embraced by their successors, had impaired in a most serious manner, and at the most important crisis, their efforts for the prosecution of the war. The despatches of Wellington, during the momentous campaign of 1810 and the commencement of 1811, are filled with observations, which, however guarded, show that he felt he was not supported at home as he ought to have been; that Government threw upon him the whole responsibility connected with the continuance of the Peninsular struggle, and were either desponding of success after the disastrous termination of the Austrian war, or deemed exertion and expenditure thrown away, from a secret impression that their ministerial career was nearly at an end, and that all continental resistance would immediately be abandoned by their successors. It was therefore matter of no small surprise to all parties, and perhaps to none more than to the minister to whom it was addressed, when the Prince Regent, immediately upon being invested with the powers of royalty, wrote a letter to Mr Perceval, announcing that he had no intentions of making any change in the Administration; and the speech to Parliament which he immediately afterwards delivered, differed in no respect, either in regard to sentiments or expression, from what might have been anticipated had George the Third still been discharging the functions of royalty.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1811, 8, 9.

Discontent which this gives to the Whig party.

Although this communication assigned as the reason, and the *sole* reason, for the Regent continuing the Tories in office, "the irresistible impulse of filial duty and affection to his beloved and afflicted father, which led him to dread that any act on his part might, in the smallest degree, have the effect of interfering with the progress of his sovereign's recovery;"

CHAP. LX. 1812.

yet the determination it contained to continue the present Government in their places, even for a limited period, gave great umbrage to the leaders of the Whig party. They complained that, as he was unrestricted in the choice of his ministers, no sufficient reason existed for the continuance in office of those to whom he had always been politically opposed; and they entertained an apprehension, which the event proved to be not unreasonable, that the habits of official communication with some of the Administration, and the social talents of others, might go far to obliterate that repugnance to the Tory party which the Prince had hitherto evinced. It was generally expected, however, that he would still revert to his earlier friends when the year during which the restrictions imposed by Parliament came to an end; and the opinion was confidently promulgated by those supposed to be most in the Regent's confidence, that February 1812 would see the Whig party entirely and permanently in office.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1812.

Negotiation with Lords Grenville in January 1812, to form a Whig Ministry, proves abortive.

The event, however, again disappointed the hopes entertained by the Opposition. Early in January 1812, the Administration sustained a loss by the resignation of Marquis Wellesley, the foreign secretary; and the reasons assigned for this step were, that the Ministry, of which Mr Perceval formed the head, could not be prevailed upon to carry on the war in the Peninsula on such a scale as was either suited to the dignity of the kingdom, or calculated to bring that contest to a successful issue. The Prince Regent, however, earnestly pressed his lordship to retain the seals of office, which he consented to do in the mean time; but when the restrictions expired in February, and still no disposition to make a change of Ministry was evinced, the resignation

Jan. 16, 1812.

Feb. 19.

was again tendered, accompanied by a statement that the new Administration should be formed on an intermediate principle between instant concession to, and perpetual exclusion of, the Catholics, and with the understanding that the war was to be carried on with adequate vigour. This second resignation was accepted; and Lord Castlereagh was appointed foreign secretary in his stead; and in the mean time the Prince Regent, through the medium of the Duke of York, opened a communication with Lords Grey and Grenville, the object of which was to induce them, and some of their friends, to form part of the Government on the principle of mutual concession and an extended basis. It was soon discovered, however, that the differences between the leaders of the Whigs and Tories were insuperable, and the result was, that the negotiation came to nothing; and a motion by Lord Boringdon in the House of Peers, for an address to the Prince Regent, praying for the formation of a ministry upon an extended basis, was negatived by a majority of seventy-two. From what transpired in this debate, it was evident that a more vital question than even that of the conduct of the foreign war, now was the obstacle to the formation of a coalition ministry, and that Catholic emancipation, to the ultimate concession of which it was known Lord Wellesley was favourable, was the real point upon which irreconcilable differences existed, both in the Cabinet and between some of its ministers and the throne.[1]

Feb. 28.

Feb. 13.

March 19.

[1] Parl. Deb. xxii. 38, 89. Ann. Reg. 1812, 129, 131.

A dreadful and unexpected event, however, soon after gave rise to a renewal of the negotiation, and opened the way apparently for the restoration of the Whigs to office, by the destruction of their most formidable and uncompromising opponent. On the

Assassination of Mr Perceval, May 11.

CHAP. LX. 1812. 11th May, as Mr Perceval was entering the lobby of the House of Commons, at a quarter past five o'clock, he was shot through the heart, and immediately afterwards expired. A cry arose, "Where is the villain who fired?" and immediately a man of the name of Bellingham stepped forward, and making no attempt to escape, calmly said, "I am the unfortunate man; my name is Bellingham; it is a private injury; I know what I have done; it was a denial of justice on the part of Government." He was immediately seized, and carried to the bar of the House of Commons, in which assembly, as well as in the Lords, the greatest agitation prevailed when the calamitous event became known; and both Houses immediately adjourned. A message of condolence was shortly
May 13. after voted to the Prince Regent; and on the 13th, Lord Castlereagh, on the part of the Government, proposed, and Mr Ponsonby, on that of the Opposition, seconded, a vote of L.50,000 to the family of the deceased minister, and L.2000 a-year annuity to his widow. It appeared, to the honour of this disinterested statesman, who had for years directed the exchequer of the most opulent empire in the world, that not only had he taken advantage of none of the means of enriching himself which were in his power, but had not even been enabled to make that moderate provision for his family of twelve children which ordinary men, who have been successful in the legal profession, generally do. These provisions, to the honour of the Opposition and of human nature be it said, passed the House without a single dissentient voice, though a debate took place upon the subsequent grant of L.3000 a-year to the eldest son of Mr Perceval, after the demise of his mother, which was, however, carried by a large majority;[1] and a monu-

[1] Ann. Reg. 1812, 75, 79. Parl. Deb. xxiii. 186, 199. May 15.

ment to his memory, at the public expense, voted in Westminster Abbey.

The trial of the assassin, as the courts were sitting, and no lengthened citation of the prisoner is required by the English law except in cases of high treason, took place on the 15th, four days after the murder. He was found guilty, and executed on the 18th in front of Newgate. His demeanour, both on the scaffold and in prison before his death, was firm, calm, and self-possessed; he engaged in his religious exercises with fervour, but uniformly persisted in denying his guilt, alleging that the death of Mr Perceval, which he always admitted, was a proper retribution for his neglect of his application for redress of private injuries. An attempt to prove him insane at the trial failed; and indeed his whole demeanour, though it indicated a degree of excitement on the subject of his real or supposed wrongs which amounted to monomania, was by no means such as to indicate that amount of mental derangement which renders an insane person irresponsible for his actions. It afterwards appeared, from the production of a letter on the subject from Lord Leveson Gower, the British ambassador at St Petersburg at the time, in the House of Commons, that, though he had sustained great patrimonial losses in England and Russia, yet they had arisen chiefly from his own intemperate conduct and language, and that his supposed claims for indemnification against the British Government, and their alleged injustice in disregarding them, were entirely visionary. But though, in all probability, the result to the unhappy man would have been the same, and public justice in the end would have required his execution, it must always be regarded with regret, as a stain upon British justice, that the motion made,

Trial and execution of the assassin.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

and earnestly insisted in by his counsel, to have the trial postponed for some days, to obtain evidence from a distance to establish his insanity, was not acceded to; that a judicial proceeding, requiring beyond all others the most calm and deliberate consideration, should have been hurried over with a precipitance which, if not illegal, was at least unusual; and that so glorious an opportunity of exhibiting the triumph of justice over the strongest and most general feelings of resentment, should have been lost from a desire to accelerate, by a few days only, the trial of the criminal.[1]

1 State Trials, 1812, xvi. 341-7. Ann. Reg. 1812. Chron. 73, 75; 304, 307.

Renewal of the negotiation with the Whigs.

This tragic event re-opened to the Whigs the path to power; for not only was the most determined opponent of them, and of the Catholic claims, now removed, but a general wish was felt and openly expressed in the nation for the formation of an administration on an extended basis; which, sinking all minor points of dispute, and embracing the leading men of both parties, should combine the whole talent of the nation in one phalanx, for the prosecution of the great contest in which it was engaged. This idea, so natural and apparently feasible to men inexperienced in public affairs—so impracticable to all acquainted with their real character, and the vital questions on which irreconcilable differences exist between equally able and conscientious statesmen—had got at this period such hold of the minds of the people, that repeated motions were made in Parliament, after Mr Perceval's death, for the formation of a cabinet embracing the leading men of ability in all parties. On the 20th May a motion for an address to the Prince Regent, praying him to construct a cabinet on this principle, brought forward by Mr Stuart Wortley, (now Lord Wharncliffe,) and supported by the whole strength of the Whigs, was

May 20.

carried against Ministers by a majority of *four*, the numbers being 174 to 170. The subject was afterwards resumed with extraordinary anxiety, on more than one occasion, in both Houses of Parliament; and in the course of these discussions it transpired, both that the Prince Regent had taken the most decisive steps to carry into effect the wishes of the nation, and that the grand difficulty which obstructed the formation of a united administration was the question of Catholic emancipation. Lord Wellesley first received a commission to form a Government; and, when he failed, that arduous duty was intrusted to Lord Moira. Lord Wellesley professed his willingness to take office on the principle of concession to the Irish Romanists, of adequate vigour in the Peninsular war, and of a union of parties in the Cabinet: but this principle the Prince Regent was not inclined to admit, and it was firmly rejected by Lord Liverpool and the Tories in office; and, after some discussion, his royal highness, through Earl Moira, conveyed a wish to Lords Grey and Grenville that they and their friends should form a leading part of the Administration. Conferences took place accordingly: the differences about the Catholics of Ireland and the American war were got over; every thing appeared on the eve of a satisfactory adjustment, and no obstacles remained to prevent the return of the Whigs to power, on all the principles for which they had so long contended, when the negotiation was suddenly broken off, and the Tories were once more firmly seated in office, by one of those unforeseen and trivial obstacles which so often, in the affairs of state, derange the calculations of the wisest statesmen, and yet decide the fate of nations.[1]

June 1.
— 5.
— 8.
— 11.

[1] Parl. Deb. xxiii. 250, 381.

In the course of Earl Moira's discussions with Earl

CHAP. LX. 1812.

Grey and Lord Grenville, which from the first were conducted with the most perfect candour and good faith on both sides, a difficulty occurred as to the appointment of the great officers of the royal household, which had not previously been anticipated, but proved fatal to the whole negotiation, and to which events in subsequent times have given an unlooked-for degree of interest. It had generally, though not always, been the practice for the chief officers of the household to be changed with an alteration of Ministry, upon the principle that a Government could not be supposed to possess the royal confidence, and must necessarily be hampered and restricted in its measures, when persons belonging to an opposite and hostile party were in daily, and almost hourly, communication, on the most intimate terms, with the sovereign. The Whig peers, in order to prevent such a difficulty arising in a more advanced stage of the Administration, stated it as an indispensable condition of their accession to office, that they should enjoy the same privileges in this respect which had been exercised by their predecessors on similar occasions, and this preliminary led to secret conferences, more curious even than what passed at the public negotiations. "Are you prepared," said Lord Moira to the Prince Regent, "to concede the appointment of the household to the leaders of the new Administration?" "I am," answered the Prince. "Then," replied the chivalrous nobleman, "not one of your present servants shall be displaced: it is enough for the crown to yield the principle, without submitting also to the indignity of the removal." To complete the extraordinary chances which traversed this momentous negotiation, Mr Sheridan, to whom Lord Yarmouth, on the part of the lords of the household, intrusted a message

Difficulty respecting the officers of the household excludes the Whigs from office.

June 6.

stating their readiness to solve the difficulty by resigning, delayed to deliver this message till it was too late, in the hope of securing for his party a triumph over the throne; and Lord Moira, upon the part of the Prince Regent, declined to make any such concession a fundamental condition of the Administration; and thus the negotiation was broken off.[1]

1812.

[1] Personal information, and Lord Yarmouth's speech. Parl. Deb. xxiii. 423.

The Prince, irritated at what he deemed an unwarrantable interference with the freedom of choice and personal comforts of the sovereign, and acting under the direction of Lord Moira, who thought he had yielded all that could be required of the crown, immediately appointed Lord Liverpool First Lord of the Treasury. All the existing ministers were continued in their places, including Lord Castlereagh in the important one of Minister of Foreign Affairs; and the Tories, lately so near shipwreck, found themselves, from the strong intermixture of personal feeling in the failure of the negotiations which had excluded their rivals, more firmly seated in power than ever. Lord Yarmouth, the highest officer in the household, whose exclusion from office was probably the principal object which the Whig leaders had in view, in insisting so much on this condition, afterwards stated in the House of Lords, that both he himself, and also all the other officers in the palace, were prepared to have resigned their offices the moment the arrangements for the formation of a new Ministry were completed; and that all they wished for was, that they themselves, and their sovereign, should be saved the pain of a dismissal.[2]

June 8.

June 11.

[2] Lord Yarmouth's speech. Parl. Deb. xxiii. 423; and Papers. Ibid. App. i. 43; and Ann. Reg. 1812, 84, 90.

In reflecting, with all the lights of subsequent experience, on the singular failure of this important negotiation, it is impossible to doubt that Lords Grey and Grenville were right in the conditions

Reflections on this subject.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

which they so firmly insisted on as a condition of their taking office. It is no doubt easy for the satirist to inveigh against the eagerness for patronage, which induces public men, after all questions of policy and principles of government have been adjusted, to break off negotiations merely because they cannot agree upon who is to have the disposal of domestic appointments; and Mr Sheridan had a fair subject for his ridicule, when he said that his friends the Whigs had fairly outdone James II., for he had lost three crowns for a mass, whereas they had lost the government of three kingdoms for three white sticks. But all this notwithstanding, it is sufficiently clear that the Whigs, who could not have foreseen the intended resignation of the Tory officers of the household, were right in stipulating for a power, if necessary, to remove them. Household appointments, of no small moment even to private individuals, are of vital consequence to kings, and still more to queens. The strongest intellect is seldom able to withstand the incessant influence of adverse opinions, delicately and skilfully applied by persons in intimate confidence, and possessing numerous opportunities for successfully impressing them. If no man is a hero, still less is he a sage, to his *valet de chambre*. It is in vain to say, that the private inclinations of the sovereign are to be consulted in preference to the wishes of his responsible ministers. Household appointments in a palace are, in truth, political situations, and must be in harmony with the principles of government which public opinion or external circumstances have rendered necessary for the country. To decide otherwise, is to impose upon Ministers the responsibility of office without its power; and hold up one government to the country

as regulating its public concerns, while another is in secret directing all its movements.

1812.

But the failure of this momentous negotiation suggests another and a still more serious subject of consideration. All the great questions of policy, both in external and internal concerns, had been arranged between the sovereign and the new Ministry. The difficulties of Catholic emancipation, the Peninsular contest, and American concession, had been satisfactorily adjusted, and a vital change in the government and policy of the country on the point of taking place, when it was prevented, and Mr Pitt's system continued as the ruling principle, by a mere contest about the appointment of three household officers! Yet what mighty interests, not only to Great Britain but the human race, were then at stake; and what wondrous changes in the course of events must have ensued, if this seemingly Providential difference about the household officers had not arisen! The contest with France, after a duration of nearly twenty years, had at length reached its crisis. The rock of Sisyphus, rolled with such difficulty to the summit of the steep, was about to recoil. The negotiation with the Whigs was broken off on the 6th June. On the 13th of the same month, Wellington crossed the Portuguese frontier, and commenced the campaign of Salamanca;[1] while, on the 23d, Napoleon passed the Niemen, and threw his crown and his life on the precarious issue of a Russian invasion.[2] The expulsion of the French from the Peninsula, the catastrophe of Moscow, the resurrection of Europe, were on the eve of commencing, when the continued fidelity of England to the cause of freedom hung on the doubtful balance of household appointments!

Vital interests at stake to Europe in this negotiation.

[1] Gurw. ix. 238.

[2] Fain. i. 163.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

If a change of Ministry had taken place at that time, the destinies of the world would probably have been changed. The Whigs, fettered by their continued protestations against the war, could not, with any regard to consistency, have prosecuted it with vigour. Their unvarying prophecies of disaster from the Peninsular contest, would have paralysed all the national efforts in support of Wellington; their continued declamations on the necessity of peace, would have led them to embrace the first opportunity of coming to an accommodation with Napoleon. Alexander, mindful of their refusal of succour after the battle of Eylau, would have been shaken in his resolution after the battle of Borodino. Sweden, unsupported by English subsidies, would not have ventured to swerve from the French alliance. The occupation of Moscow would have led to a submission destructive of the liberties of Europe; or the retreat, unthreatened, from the north, would have been spared half its horrors; at latest, peace would have been concluded with the French Emperor at Prague. Wellington would have been withdrawn with barren laurels from the Peninsula, Europe yet groaning under the yoke of military power, and the dynasty of Napoleon still upon the throne. In contemplating the intimate connexion of such marvellous results with the apparently trivial question of household appointments in the royal palace of Great Britain, the reflecting observer, according to the temper of his mind, will indulge in the vein of pleasantry or the sentiment of thankfulness. The disciples of Voltaire, recollecting how a similar court intrigue arrested the course of Marlborough's victories in one age, and prolonged the popular rule in Great Britain in another, will inveigh

Results which would have followed if the Whigs had then obtained office.

against the subjection of human affairs to the direction of chance, the caprice of sovereigns, or the arts of courtiers; while the Christian philosopher, impressed with the direction of all earthly things by an Almighty hand, will discern in these apparently trivial events the unobserved springs of Supreme intelligence; and conclude, that as much as royal partialities may be the unconscious instruments of reward to an upright and strenuous, they may be the ministers of retribution to a selfish and corrupted age.

Character of George the Fourth.

George IV., who, probably from personal rather than public considerations, was led to take this important step in the outset of his government, had the good fortune to wield the sceptre of Great Britain during the most glorious reign in its long and memorable annals; and yet no sovereign ever owed so little to his own individual wisdom or exertions. The triumphs which have rendered his age immortal were prepared by other hands, and matured in a severer discipline. It was his good fortune to succeed to the throne at a time when the seeds sown by the wisdom of preceding statesmen, the valour of former warriors, and the steadiness of the last monarch, were beginning to come to maturity; and thus he reaped the harvest prepared, in great part, by the labours of others. Yet justice must assign him a considerable place in the august temple of glory constructed during his reign: if the foundation had been laid, and the structure was far advanced, when he was called to its direction, he had the merit of putting the last hand to the immortal fabric. To the vast and unprecedented exertions made by Great Britain towards the close of the contest, he gave his cordial concurrence; he resisted the seducing offers of peace, when they could have led only to an armed

CHAP. LX. 1812.

neutrality; and, by his steady adherence to the principles of the Grand Alliance, contributed in no slight degree to keep together its discordant elements, when they were ready to fall to pieces, amidst the occasional disasters and frequent jealousies of the last years of the war. The unprecedented triumphs with which it concluded, and the profound peace which has since followed, left little room for external exploits during the remainder of his reign; and the monarch was of too indolent a disposition, and too limited a range of intellectual vision, to influence those momentous internal changes which ensued, or take any part either in advancing or retarding the vast revolution of general thought which succeeded to the excitement and animation of the war. Yet history must at least award to him the negative merit of having done nothing to accelerate the changes which grew up with such extraordinary rapidity during that period, so fertile in intellectual innovation; of having been the last man in his dominions who assented to that momentous change in their religious institutions, which first loosened the solid fabric of the British empire; and of having left to his successors the constitution in state, at a period when it was seriously menaced by domestic distress and general delusion, unimpaired either by tyrannic encroachments or democratic innovations.

His private disposition and character.

If, from the comparatively blameless and glorious picture of George IV.'s public administration, we turn to the details of his private life, and the features of his individual character, we shall find less to approve and more to condemn. Yet even there some alleviating circumstances may be found; and the British nation, in the calamities which hereafter may ensue from the failure of the direct line of

succession, can discern only the natural result of the restrictions, equally impolitic and unjust, which it has imposed, in their dearest concerns, on the feelings of its sovereigns. His talents were of no ordinary kind, and superior to those of any of his family. It is impossible to see the busts of the sons of George III. in Chantrey's gallery, without being at once convinced that the Prince of Wales had the most intellectual head of the group.* His tastes were cultivated; he had a high admiration for the great works of painting; his ear in music was exquisite; and although his passion in architecture was rather for the splendour of internal decoration than the majesty of external effect, yet the stately halls of Windsor will long remain an enduring monument of his patronage of art in its highest branches. The jealousy which generally exists between the ruling sovereign and the heir-apparent, early brought him into close connexion with the leaders of the Whig party; and, for nearly fifteen years, Carlton House was the grand rendezvous of all the statesmen, wits, and beauties, whom jealousy of the reigning power had thrown into the arms of the Opposition. This circumstance had a material influence on his future character. Accustomed from his earliest youth to the society, not merely of the most elegant but the most intellectual men of his age; the companion not less than the friend of Burke and Fox, of Grey and Sheridan, he

CHAP. LX. 1812.

* This is decisively established by the testimony of no ordinary observer, and certainly no partial judge. "It may give you pleasure," said Lord Byron to Sir Walter Scott, "to hear that the Prince Regent's eulogium on you to me was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it; and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living gentleman."—Lord Byron *to* Sir Walter Scott, *July* 6, 1812. Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ii. 402.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

soon acquired that skill and delicacy in conversation which such intercourse alone can communicate, and shone with the reflected light which so often, in those habituated to such society, dazzles the inexperienced beholder, and supplies, at least during the hours of social intercourse, the want of original thought or solid acquirements. Yet his talents were not entirely imbibed from the brilliant circle by which he was surrounded. His perceptions were quick; his abilities, when fairly roused either by the animation of conversation or the lustre of external events, considerable; and many of his holograph letters are a model of occasional felicity both in thought and expression.* His features were handsome; his figure, in youth, graceful and commanding; and both then and when it was injured in maturer years by the hereditary corpulence of his family, his manners were so perfectly finished, that he was universally admitted to deserve the title which he acquired, of the First Gentleman in Europe.

His frailties and faults.

But with these, no inconsiderable qualities it is true in a sovereign, the meed of praise due to his memory is exhausted, and there remains nothing but to do justice to the faults, and draw no screen over the many frailties of his character. Thrown from the outset of life into the vortex of dissipation, with-

* The following holograph note from the Prince Regent to the Duke of Wellington accompanied the appointment of the latter as Field-Marshal after the battle of Vittoria:—"Your glorious conduct is above all human praise, and far above my reward. I know no language the world affords worthy to express it. I feel I have nothing left to say, but devoutly to offer up my prayer of gratitude to Providence, that it has, in its omnipotent bounty, blessed my country and myself with such a general. You have sent me, among the trophies of your unrivalled fame, the staff of a French marshal, and I send you in return that of England."—*The* PRINCE REGENT *to* WELLINGTON, 3*d July* 1813—GURWOOD, x. 532.

out the necessity for exertion, which, in an humbler rank, or on a more arbitrary throne, so often counteracts its pernicious effects, he soon became an ardent votary of pleasure; and without descending to the degrading habits to which that propensity often leads, he only rendered its sway on this account the more tyrannical and destructive to his character. Profuse, extravagant, and unreflecting, he not only was, throughout his whole life before he mounted the throne, drowned in debt, but the systematic pursuit of refined enjoyment involved him in many discreditable and unfeeling, some dishonourable, acts. Dissipation and profligacy in youth, indeed, are so usual in princes, and arise so readily from the society with which they are surrounded, that they are to such persons peculiarly difficult of resistance; but the passions of George IV., fretting against the unjust restrictions of the Marriage Act, led him into delinquencies of a more serious kind. His conduct towards Queen Caroline, whatever the demerits of that princess may have been, was unpardonable; for it began to be unjust before those demerits could have been known, and continued to be unfeeling after misfortune had expiated them by suffering; and if it be true, as is generally believed, that he gained possession of the person of a most amiable and superior woman, Mrs Fitzherbert, by a fictitious or elusory marriage ceremony, and afterwards made, as he certainly did, his friends in Parliament deny its existence, and subsequently deserted her, he was guilty of an act which passion cannot extenuate and royalty should not excuse. The last days of this fortunate monarch and systematic voluptuary were chiefly spent at Windsor, in the seclusion of elegant society, intermingled with the brilliancy of conversa-

CHAP. LX. 1812.

tional talent; and if its noble halls were the scene of meretricious ascendant, at least they were not disgraced by open profligacy: decency and seclusion threw a veil over irregular connexions; and justice must admit that subjection to female charms was in his case more than usually pardonable, from the unjust laws which had deprived him of a free choice in virtuous attachments, and the calamitous union which had denied him the blessings of domestic and filial love.

Character of Lord Liverpool.

It is a singular circumstance, that the statesman who with his sovereign was thus elevated to the helm at a crisis of unexampled difficulty, and when the national prospects were to all appearance gloomy in the extreme, was almost from the moment of his elevation borne forward on an uninterrupted flood of success; and that, though inferior in capacity to many of the great characters who had preceded him in the struggle, he exceeded them all in the felicity of his career, and the glorious events which, under his administration, were so deeply engraved on the monuments of history. Much of this extraordinary prosperity is doubtless to be ascribed to his singular good fortune. He had the almost unprecedented felicity of being called to the highest place in government at the very time when the tide, which is ever discernible in the affairs of men, was beginning to turn; when the stream-flow of Napoleon's triumphs was turning into ebb; and when the constancy of Britain, long conspicuous in adverse, was to be rewarded by the gales of prosperous fortune. Like his royal master George IV., he thus reaped, with little exertion of his own, the fruits of the seed sown by the efforts of others; and was called, during his long ministry, rather to moderate the vices consequent on excessive pro-

sperity, than to sustain the national spirit under the trials of long-continued and searching adversity.

Justice, however, must assign to Lord Liverpool, if not the highest, at least a considerable place among the great men who threw such imperishable glory over the annals of Britain during the latter period of the war. His capacity could not have been the least, who stood foremost in rank through those memorable years: granting to Alexander, Wellington, and Castlereagh, the merit of having been the main instruments in the deliverance of Europe, the British premier may at least justly lay claim to the subordinate but important merit of having strenuously supported their efforts, and furnished them with the means of achieving such important triumphs. His judgment in counsel, temper in debate, and conciliation in diplomacy, seconded admirably their heroic efforts. The resources brought by England to bear upon the fortunes of Europe at the close of the struggle, were unexampled since the beginning of the world; and if the spirit of the nation put them at his disposal, no small wisdom and skill were displayed in the use which he made of them. Notwithstanding all their successes, the allied sovereigns were sometimes, from the jealousies and separate interests inherent in so vast a coalition, exposed to serious divisions; and on these occasions the judgment and prudence of Lord Liverpool were of the highest service to the common cause. He could not be called a powerful debater, and his speeches made little impression at the time on either House of Parliament; but they abounded in matter and sound argument, and few afford, on a retrospect, a more luminous view of the principles which swayed the Government at many of the most important periods

His merits and public services.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

of the war. His private life was irreproachable, his domestic habits pure and amiable; and, like all the great statesmen of that heroic period, he long held the highest offices, and disposed of uncounted wealth, without a spot upon his integrity, or having conferred a more than moderate share of patronage on his connexions.

His weaknesses and errors.

He held a respectable place, however, in the second class of statesmen only, and did not belong to the master-spirits of mankind. He had not sufficient vigour of character, or reliance on his own judgment, to take a decided line in any arduous crisis. His maxim always was to temporize and avoid difficulties, rather than brave the danger in the outset. Under a calm and dignified deportment, and the most unruffled suavity in debate, he concealed an anxiety of temper and dread of responsibility, which appeared conspicuous at the council board, and rendered him unfit to hold the helm in any period of real danger. He had neither the ardour of genius, nor the strength of intellect, nor the heroism of valour in his character. Clear-sighted as to immediate, his vision was defective as to remoter dangers. Judicious and prudent in counsel in ordinary times, he was a dangerous adviser in cases of difficulty; and exercised a ruinous influence on the ultimate fortunes of his country. He was mainly instrumental in introducing, after the close of the war, that seductive policy which purchases present popularity by sacrificing future resources, and wins the applause of the existing multitude by risking the censure of the thinking in every future age. The popularity, accordingly, of his government, during the fifteen years that he remained Prime Minister, was unprecedented; opposition seemed to have disappeared in Parliament, as

it was thought to have expired in the country. But, amidst all these seductive appearances, the elements of future discord were preparing: the Sinking Fund was fatally encroached upon, amidst the general applause of the unthinking multitude; indirect taxes, the pillar of public credit, were repealed to an unnecessary and ruinous extent; a vast and uncalled-for monetary change spread unheard-of discontent through the industrious classes; the people were habituated to the pernicious flattery that their voice is wisdom, and must be obeyed; and out of the calm which was thought to be perpetual, arose the tornado which changed the constitution.

Restoration of the Duke of York to the command of the army, May 25, 1811.

The year 1811 beheld the extinction of the absurd and exaggerated discontent against the Duke of York, which, for factious purposes, had been raised two years before. Colonel Wardle, the principal agent in producing the clamour, had long since returned to obscurity; the want of the Duke's long acquaintance with the business of the Horse Guards, and active zeal for the interests of the army, had long been severely felt; and, on the 25th May 1811, after somewhat more than two years spent in a private station, he was again, with the general concurrence of the nation, and the universal approbation of the army, reinstated in his office of commander-in-chief, which he held during the whole remainder of the war. The subject was brought forward by Lord Milton in Parliament shortly after it occurred; but the result only tended to demonstrate, in the most decisive manner, the total revolution which public opinion had undergone regarding it. The debate was feebly conducted on the part of the Opposition: when Lord Milton put the case hypothetically, that "the Duke might have been the victim of

CHAP. LX. 1811.

a foul conspiracy," an universal cheer burst from all parts of the House, and the motion to have the appointment censured, was negatived by a majority of 249—the numbers being 296 to 47.[1] If any doubt could still exist on the justice as well as expedience of this step, it would be removed by the contemporary testimony of Wellington. "I rejoice most sincerely," said he, "at the re-appointment of the Duke of York as commander-in-chief. The arrangement is not less a matter of justice to him than of benefit to the public interests; and it has been so admirably timed, that the motion of Lord Milton is likely to be advantageous to the Duke's character."[2]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1811, 72, 74. Parl. Deb. ix. 470, 510.

[2] Wellington to Torrens, June 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 61.

Two circumstances, during the years 1810 and 1811, convulsed the internal frame of society to an extraordinary degree, and are deserving of notice even in a general history. These were the Parliamentary proceedings against Sir Francis Burdett for contempt of the House of Commons, and the general distress which led to the Luddite disturbances.

Character of Sir Francis Burdett.

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT is a statesman who, for nearly half a century, has taken so prominent a part in English parliamentary history, that he deserves a place in the portrait-gallery of the age. Endowed by nature with no ordinary talents, an accomplished scholar, an eloquent speaker, an indefatigable senator, the master of a splendid fortune, and connected both by position in society and family alliances with the higher branches of the nobility, he was yet for the greater part of his political career the ardent friend of the people—the adored, often rash and dangerous, champion of popular rights—a zealous advocate for Parliamentary Reform in its widest sense,—an extended suffrage, Catholic emancipation, and all the objects which the extreme section of the Whig party

had at heart. But he was at the same time at bottom a sincere friend to the monarchy, and pursued these objects from a belief sincere and honest, though now proved to be mistaken, that such changes, even if pushed to their utmost limits, were not inconsistent with the security of property, the stability of the altar, the existence of the throne. A sense of this error caused him in the close of life, after the effect of the Reform Bill had become apparent, to join the Conservative ranks; but at the period with which we are now engaged, he was the most furious opponent of the oligarchy who, he conceived, directed the national councils; and "England's pride and Westminster's glory," as he was termed by his potwalloping constituents in that borough, was ever in the foremost ranks of those who declaimed with most asperity against ministerial influence or parliamentary corruption. CHAP. LX. 1811.

He had long inveighed in no measured strains against the Tory majority by which the proceedings of the House of Commons were controlled; but as most of these declamations were pronounced within the walls of Parliament, they were beyond the reach of animadversion. At length, however, he laid himself open to attack in a more vulnerable quarter. A violent democrat, named John Gale Jones, had published a resolution of a debating club of which he was president, which the House of Commons deemed a libel on their proceedings, and that assembly had in consequence sent him to Newgate for breach of privilege. Sir Francis more than once brought this matter under the consideration of the House, and strongly contended, though in vain, that Parliament had no legal power to punish a person of their own authority for an offence cognizable in the ordinary courts of justice, even though it did

His libel on the House of Commons.

Feb. 21.

March 12.

CHAP. LX. 1811. Mar. 24. contain a libel on their proceedings, and that the warrant of commitment was illegal and a breach of the liberties of the subject. The House overruled these arguments by a majority of 153 to 14. Upon this Sir Francis published a letter to his constituents in Cobbett's *Weekly Register*, which, among other passages of strong invective, declared that the real question was, "Whether our liberty be still to be secured to us by the laws of our forefathers, or to lie at the absolute mercy of a part of our fellow-subjects, collected together by means which it is not necessary for me to describe. They have become, by burgage tenure, the proprietors of the whole legislature, and in that capacity, inflated with their high-flown and fanciful ideas of majesty, they assume the sword of prerogative, and lord it equally over the king and people!"[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1810, 92, 99.

His committal to the Tower, and consequent riots. Mar. 26.

The House of Commons, upon this letter being brought before them, passed a resolution, by a majority of 190 to 152, that Sir Francis be committed to the Tower. Great doubts were entertained in the first instance by the Speaker, whether his warrant, which was immediately issued, would authorize the breaking open of Sir Francis's house, which was barricaded, and where he remained without moving out. The Attorney-General, (Sir V. Gibbs,) however, gave it as his opinion that entry might be made good by force, if it could not otherwise be obtained; and the Sergeant-at-Arms accordingly, on the day following, forced his way in by the aid of a police force, supported on the outside by the military. Sir Francis was found in his library, surrounded by his family, and employed in making his son translate *Magna Charta*. Having made such a show of resistance as to demonstrate that he yielded to compulsion, he was conveyed under a military escort to the Tower,

where he remained a prisoner till the close of the session of Parliament. Serious riots occurred, and some lives were lost on the evening of the day on which the imprisonment took place, chiefly in consequence of an erroneous report which was spread that the Tower guns had fired upon the people. Sir Francis afterwards wrote an intemperate letter to the Speaker on the alleged illegality of the proceeding, which, however, the House had the good sense, having exhausted their powers of chastisement, to pass over without further notice. Meanwhile, the imprisoned baronet received a great variety of addresses from various popular assemblies in the kingdom, and the House of Commons was deluged with petitions for his liberation: but they continued firm; and Sir Francis remained in confinement till the prorogation of Parliament, when the power of the assembly which committed him having ceased, he was of course liberated. Great preparations for his triumphal procession through the city to his residence in Piccadilly, were made by the populace, and serious apprehensions of disturbances were entertained; but he had the good sense or humanity not to bring his partisans into the risk which such a demonstration would have occasioned, by returning privately to his house by water. He afterwards brought actions at law against the Speaker of the House of Commons, for damages on account of illegal seizure, housebreaking, and imprisonment; and against Lord Moira, the Governor of the Tower, for unwarrantable detention; and the case was argued with the greatest ability by the Attorney-General on the one side, and Sergeant (afterwards Mr Justice) Holroyd on the other. The Court of King's Bench,[1] however, sustained the defence for both, that they acted under

1811.

April 9.

May 21.

[1] Parl. Deb. xvi. 454, 630. Ann. Reg. 1810, 106, 110; and App. to Chron. 265, 267.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

the orders of a competent authority, and that the privileges of Parliament had not been exceeded, and could not be questioned in a court of law.

Reflections on this subject.

Upon this case it has been observed by Mr Coleridge:—"The House of Commons must of course have the power of taking cognizance of offences against its own rights. Sir Francis Burdett might have been properly sent to the Tower for the speech which he made to the House; but when afterwards he published them in Cobbett, and they took cognizance of it as a breach of privilege, they violated the plain distinction between privilege and law. As a speech in the House, the House could alone animadvert upon it, consistently with the effective preservation of its most necessary prerogative of freedom of debate; but when that speech became a book, then the law was to look upon it; and there being a law of libel commensurate with every possible object of attack in the state, privilege, which acts or ought to act only as a substitute for other laws, could have nothing to do with it."[1] In these observations of the philosophic sage, there is much subject for anxious reflection in the breast of every friend to real freedom. It is the essential characteristic of such a blessing, that it renders law omnipotent and personal privilege quiescent: the monarch may punish an insult offered to his authority, but he must do so by prosecutions in his own courts of law, and by proving the accused party guilty before a jury of his subjects. There is not only the same, but a much stronger reason, why a numerous assembly of the Legislature should be constrained to enforce the respect due to their authority or deliberations when insulted out of their own presence, and not at the moment interfering with their

[1] Table-Talk, i. 8, 9.

own discussions, in the same way: for in their case numbers destroy responsibility without conferring wisdom,* while ambition weakens the sense of justice without adding to the capacity for judgment. In this respect there is no difference whether the assembly is of a popular or aristocratic class; whether it is subject to the caprices of a tyrant majority, or swayed by the influence of a corrupt court: human nature is always the same, and the danger of tyranny is not the less formidable that its powers are wielded by a multitude of tyrants. Under pretence of maintaining the inviolability of their own privileges, a despotic assembly may entirely extinguish those of their subjects. While professing for themselves the most unbounded freedom of discussion, they may crush all fearless examination of their conduct by others. Diminution of respect, degradation of authority, need never be apprehended from the legislature claiming no superiority in this respect over the sovereign or the judges of the land: the makers of laws never stand on so lofty a pedestal as when they acknowledge the paramount authority, in their application, of the courts by whom they are administered; they never descend so low as when they set the first example of violating that general equality which they have proclaimed for their subjects.†

The popular discontents, excited by this ill-timed and doubtfully founded assertion of the powers of

* "In the multitude of counsellors," says Solomon, "there is safety." "Yes," said Dr Gregory: "but it is safety to the *counsellors, not the counselled.*"

† The author cannot dismiss this subject without offering his tribute of praise to the dignified firmness of Mr Sheriff Evans and Mr Sheriff Wheelton, who in 1840 have so nobly vindicated these privileges, and have obtained in consequence a distinguished place in the glorious pantheon of British patriots.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

sovereignty by the House of Commons, were augmented to an alarming degree by the general distress which prevailed in the manufacturing districts of Great Britain during the latter part of the year 1810 and the whole of 1811. Various causes contributed to produce this distressing result; but among them the least influence is to be imputed to the Continental System of Napoleon, to which his panegyrists are willing to ascribe the whole. The real causes were very different; and either arose necessarily from the progress of society, or might have been easily avoided by a more prudent policy on the part of the British merchants and Government. Machinery at that period had taken one of its great starts in the application of its powers to manufacturing industry. The mule and the spinning-jenny; the vast improvements of Arkwright and Cartwright, had been added to the immortal discovery of Watt; and the operative classes, in great part deprived of their employment by the change, brooded in sullen exasperation at innovations which they regarded, not without some show of reason, as destructive of the subsistence of themselves and their families. The vast export trade, which had risen to the unprecedented amount of nearly £47,000,000 sterling in the year 1809, in consequence of the withdrawal of the French coast-guard from northern Germany, to restore the fortunes of the empire on the Danube, had engendered a spirit of speculation which regarded the exports to continental Europe as unbounded, and terminated in a cruel reverse, from the confiscation of a fleet of above three hundred merchantmen, having on board goods to an immense amount, in the Baltic, in November 1810, by order of the Emperor of Russia. But, above all, the natural irritation of the American Government at the un-

General distress in the manufacturing districts in 1811, and its causes.

bounded vexations to which they were exposed by both the belligerent powers from the operation of the Berlin and Milan decrees, and the Orders in Council, had produced, on the part of the Government of the United States, the Non-Intercourse Act in February 1811, whereby all commercial connexion, both with France and England, was terminated, and the vast market of the United States, worth all other foreign markets put together, which took off British manufactures to the amount of above thirteen millions sterling, was entirely lost. To complete the causes of general distress which then pressed upon the nation, the harvests of 1810 and 1811 were so deficient, that in the last of these years the importation amounted to 1,471,000 quarters, to purchase which the enormous sum of £4,271,000, chiefly in specie, was drained out of the country.[1] These causes, joined to the excessive drain of specie arising from the vast expenditure and boundless necessities of the war, both in Germany and the Peninsula, in the year 1809, produced a very great degree of commercial distress through the whole of 1811; and the reality of the defalcation, and the alarming decline in the market for our manufacturing industry, appeared in the most decisive manner from the returns of exports, which sunk in that year to twenty-eight millions, being fifteen millions less than they had been in the preceding year, and much lower than they had sunk since the renewal of the war.[1] *

[1] Parl Deb. xxi. 178.

[1] Porter's Rise, &c. of Britain, ii. 98. Parl. Deb. xxi. 1094, 1163.

So general and pressing was the public distress,

* Exports (official value) from 1808 to 1812:—

	Foreign and Colonial.	British and Irish.	Total.
1808,	£5,776,775	£24,611,215	£30,387,990
1809,	12,750,358	33,542,274	46,292,632
1810,	9,357,435	34,061,901	43,419,336
1811,	6,117,720	22,681,400	28,799,120
1812,	9,533,065	29,508,508	39,041,573

—PORTER'S *Rise and Progress of the Nation*, II. 98.

CHAP. LX.

1811.

and so overwhelming, in particular, the embarrassments in which the commercial classes were involved, that Parliament, in spring 1811, with great propriety, following the example of 1793, came forward for their relief. In March of that year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward a bill for the purpose of authorizing Government to issue exchequer bills to the mercantile classes to the extent of six millions sterling, the advances to be repaid by instalments at nine and twelve months after receipt. This resolution was agreed to without a division; and, although not more than half of this large sum was actually required or taken up by the community, yet the fact of Government coming forward in this way had a most important effect in upholding commercial credit, and preventing the occurrence of one of those panics, so common in subsequent times, which might have proved extremely dangerous at that political crisis to the empire. Little of the money thus advanced was ultimately lost to the community; but it must always be considered as an act highly honourable to the British Government, that, at a period when they were oppressed by a sinking exchequer and an increasing war expenditure, they came forward with this splendid advance to sustain the mercantile credit, and assuage the manufacturing distress of the community.[1]

Commercial relief afforded by Parliament, Feb. 14.

[1] Parl. Deb. xix. 327. 350.

It may readily be conceived what wide-spread internal distress and discontent so prodigious a diminution in the colonial and manufacturing exports of the kingdom must have occasioned, especially when coming in the nineteenth year of the war, and to a nation already overburdened with excessive and universal taxation. The unhappy operatives

Origin and progress of the Luddite disturbances.

who were thrown out of employment, suffering severe distress, and incapable of extending their vision to the wide and far distant causes which had concurred to produce these calamitous results, conceived that their distresses were owing to the introduction of machinery into the manufactories, and would be relieved by their destruction. A wide-spread conspiracy was, in consequence, formed for the destruction of the obnoxious frames, which, originating in the weaving districts of Nottinghamshire, soon spread to the adjoining counties of Derby and Leicester, and involved a large part of the manufacturing zone of England in riot and alarm. Open assemblages of the disaffected, and undisguised violence, took place; but these excesses were speedily suppressed by the interposition of the military; and the conspirators, who acted in concert, and took the name of Luddites, from that of General Ludd, their imaginary leader, adopted the more dangerous system of assembling secretly at night, quickly completing the work of destruction, and immediately dispersing before either their persons could be identified, or assistance from the nearest military station procured.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1812, 35, 38. Parl. Deb. xxi. 807, 820.

They come to a height, and are suppressed.

At length, in the winter of 1811 and the spring of 1812, the evil rose to such a height, especially in the great and populous county of York, that it attracted the serious attention of both Houses of Parliament. Secret committees were appointed in consequence, who collected a large mass of evidence, and made reports of great value on the subject. From the information obtained, it appeared that, though this illegal confederacy had its ramifications through all the central counties of England where manufactures were established, and was organized in the most efficient

CHAP. LX. 1811.

manner to effect the objects of the conspirators, yet it was almost entirely confined to persons in the very lowest ranks of life, and was rather directed to the immediate objects of riot and plunder, than any general or systematic change in the frame of government. A bill, limited however in its duration to the 1st January 1814, was passed into a law, rendering the breaking of frames a capital offence; and with such energy was this law carried into operation, that no less than seventeen men were condemned to death, and executed in the court-yard of the castle of York, at one time, for crimes connected with these disturbances. This dreadful but necessary example had the effect of stopping these dangerous riots, which, like other undisguised inroads on life and property, however formidable in the vicinity where they occur, are never dangerous in a national point of view, if not aided by the pusillanimity or infatuation of the middle and higher ranks; and, before the end of the year, all disposition even to these excesses died away under the cheering influence of the extended market for manufacturing industry, which arose from the opening of the Baltic harbours, and the animating events of the Russian campaign.[1]

Feb. 26.

[1] Ann. Reg. 1812, 35, 38, 132. Chron. 17, 30. Parl. Deb. xxi. 807, 840.

Among the senators in the Opposition ranks who distinguished themselves by their resistance to this increase, even for a limited period, of the number of capital offences in English law, and who devoted the energies of a powerful mind and the warmth of a benevolent heart, to the end of his life, to effect a reduction in its sanguinary enactments, was SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY. This great lawyer, and truly estimable statesman, was of French descent; but his parents had settled in London, where his father carried on business as a jeweller; and he had the merit

Character of Sir Samuel Romilly.

of raising himself, by his unaided exertions, from the respectable but comparatively humble sphere in which they moved, to the most exalted station and society. He was called to the bar in 1783; and it was impossible that his perseverance and logical precision of argument could have failed of raising him to eminence in that profession, where talent in the end never fails to overbear all competition; and he was highly distinguished, and in great practice in Chancery, before he was heard of beyond the legal circles of the metropolis. His reputation, however, at length procured for him more elevated destinies: in 1806 he was made solicitor-general by Mr Fox, and elevated to the rank of knighthood; and at the same time he took his seat in Parliament as one of the members for Queensborough, thus adding another to the long array of illustrious men, on both sides of politics, who have been ushered into public life through the portals of the nomination boroughs, which the Reform Bill has now for ever closed. He took an active part in many of the most important debates which subsequently occurred in Parliament, particularly those on the slave trade, the regency, and Catholic emancipation; and he had already attempted, and in part effected, a great improvement in the law of bankruptcy,[1] when his attention was attracted by the state of the criminal law, to the amelioration of which, during the remainder of his parliamentary career, his efforts were chiefly directed.[2]

[1] 46 Geo. III. c. 135.

[2] Romilly's Speeches and Memoir, i. 29.

His political principles were those of the Whig party; but he was alike free, by character and professional success, from factious ambition; and the improvement of the human race was the object for which his philanthropic heart beat to the latest hour

CHAP. LX. 1811.

of existence. Exemplary and affectionate in the relations of private life, he contrived, in the midst of all the labours and anxieties consequent on his legal and parliamentary career, to find time for domestic society. The seventh day of rest was never broken in upon by his labours; and when making twelve thousand a-year at the bar, and actively discharging his duties in the House of Commons, he contrived to keep up his acquaintance with all the literature of the day, as well as the studies of his earlier years;[1] a fact which, however inexplicable to those who are unaccustomed to such exertions, is verified by every day's experience of those who are; and which arises from the circumstance, that to the mind trained to intellectual toil, recreation arises rather from change of employment, or a new direction to thought, than entire cessation from labour.

[1] Personal Knowledge.

Condition of English criminal law at this period.

The condition of the English criminal law at this period was, indeed, such as to call for the serious attention of every real friend to his country and mankind. Political power having for a long, almost immemorial period, been really vested in the wealthier classes, either of the landed or commercial orders, penal legislation had been mainly directed to the punishment of the crimes which had been found by experience to be dangerous to their possessions, and had, in consequence, been founded on no principle, and regulated by no justice. Every interest in the state, during the course of several centuries, had by turns enjoyed influence sufficient to procure the passing of laws denouncing capital punishments against the perpetrators of crimes peculiarly hostile to its own property; and these successive additions to the penal code were silently acquiesced in by all other classes, upon the understanding that a

similar protection would be extended to them when circumstances seemed to render it necessary. Thus the landholders, whose influence had so long been predominant in the Chapel of St Stephen's, had obtained a huge addition to the catalogue of capital punishments for offences trenching on their freeholds. The trading classes had been equally diligent in having the punishment of death affixed to theft from the person, within shops, or from warehouses or manufactories. Shipmasters and merchants had done the same for the protection of their interests; and so strongly were the dangers of forgery felt in a mercantile community, that it had come to pass into a sort of axiom, which obtained universal assent, that nothing but that terrible sanction could preserve from fearful invasion the rights of the great body of traders throughout the empire.

Results which had arisen from its neglect.

The result of this separate and selfish system of legislation had come to be, that in 1809, when Sir Samuel Romilly set about the reformation of this blood-stained code, the punishment of death was by statute affixed to above six hundred different crimes, while the increasing humanity of the age had induced so wide a departure from the strict letter of the law, that out of eighteen hundred and seventy-two persons capitally convicted at the Old Bailey in seven years, from 1803 to 1810, only *one* had been executed. All those concerned in the prosecution of offences, combined their efforts to mitigate in practice its sanguinary enactments. Individuals injured declined to give information or prosecute, unless in cases of serious injury, or when their passions were strongly roused; witnesses hung back from giving explicit evidence at the trials, lest their consciences should be haunted by the recollection of what they deemed,

CHAP. LX. 1811.

often not without reason, as little better than judicial murder; jurymen made light of their oaths, and introduced a most distressing uncertainty into the result of criminal prosecutions; and even judges often caught at the evanescent distinctions which the acuteness of lawyers had made between offences, and willingly admitted the subtleties which were to save the offender's life. The consequence was, that not more than two-thirds of the persons committed for trial were convicted; the remainder, after contracting the whole contagion of a prison, were let loose upon the world, matured in all the habits of iniquity; and the depraved criminals, seeing so many chances of escape, before and after apprehension, ceased to have any serious fears for the uncertain penalties of criminal justice.[1]

[1] Romilly's Speech, Feb. 9, 1810. Speeches, i. 106, 107. Parl. Deb. xvi. 366, 372.

Principles for which Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh contended.

The principles, on the other hand, for which Sir Samuel Romilly, and, after his lamented death in 1818, Sir James Mackintosh contended, were, that the essential quality of criminal law, without which all its provisions would be of little avail, was *certainty;* that, to attain this, the cordial co-operation of all classes of society, as well as the activity of the constable and the diligence of the prosecutor, was requisite; that this co-operation could never be secured, unless the punishments affixed by law to offences were such as to offer no violence to the feelings of justice which are found in every bosom; and that these feelings would never have been implanted so strongly as they are in the human heart, if the interests of society had required their perpetual violation. These principles, which require only to be stated to command the cordial assent of every intelligent mind, have since been fully carried into effect in every part of Great Britain; the penalty of death

has come to be practically abolished for almost every offence except murder; and secondary punishments have been apportioned out, as accurately as the vast simultaneous growth of crime rendered practicable, to the real merits of the offences to which they were affixed. If the result has hitherto exhibited no diminution, but on the contrary been coexistent with a vast increase in the sum-total of delinquencies, it has at least produced a most gratifying decrease in the more atrocious and violent offences; a much greater degree of certainty has been introduced into criminal proceedings; and in Scotland, in particular, where the system of penal jurisprudence has long been established on a far better footing than in England, the certainty of punishment to the guilty, and of acquittal to the innocent, has attained a height unparalleled in any other age or country of the globe.* With the diminution of its sanguinary enactments, however, the English criminal law has felt the difficulty of secondary penalties; the multitude of convicts who required transportation, has caused the evils and sufferings of the penal settlements to increase in an alarming degree; and society at home, overburdened with a flood of juvenile delinquency, has long laboured under the evils of inadequate jail accommodation, for which all the efforts of philanthropy, and all the improvements of prison discipline, have hitherto proved an inadequate remedy.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

Important in their ultimate effects as were these beginnings of interior reformation, of which society, from the important changes which it underwent during the progress of the war, stood so much in need, they yet yielded, in the magnitude of their present consequences, to the three great subjects of

* See Note A, Appendix.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

internal debate in Parliament and the nation, during the years 1811 and 1812; viz. the Question of the Currency, the Repeal of the Orders in Council, and the Prosecution of the War in the Peninsula.

Review of the measures of Mr Pitt, connected with the currency.

It has been already noticed * how Mr Pitt, driven by hard necessity, had adopted the momentous step of suspending cash payments in February 1797; and that, after more than one temporary act had been passed, postponing the period for their resumption, it was at length enacted, by the 44 Geo. III. c. 1, that the restriction in favour of the Bank should continue till six months after the conclusion of a general peace. Allusion has also been more than once made to the prodigious effect which this unavoidable measure had in raising prices and vivifying industry during the war; † and no one can doubt that it was in the great extension of the currency, which took place from 1797 to 1810, that the resources were mainly found, which provided both for the long-continued efforts with which it was attended, and the gigantic expenditure of its later years. Now that the true principles which regulate this important subject have, from long and dear-bought experience, come to be so well understood, it may readily be conceived how the increase of the Bank issues, from eleven millions in spring 1797 to twenty-one millions in 1810, and twenty-seven millions in 1815, must have tended both to alter the prices of commodities of all sorts throughout the empire, and to induce the extraordinary and unprecedented vigour which was conspicuous during all that period, both in our foreign commerce and internal industry,

* Ante, III. 207.

† Ante, V. 610, 611; III. 208, 209; IV. 639, 640.

and which supported the vast and long-continued national efforts.* CHAP. LX.

In the course of the years 1809 and 1810, however, the combinations of a variety of causes produced an extraordinary demand for an enlarged currency for domestic transactions, at the very time that the whole gold, and great part of the silver specie of the country, were drained off for the purposes of foreign warfare. The prodigious increase in the exports and imports during these years, in consequence of the opening of the German harbours in the former, and of the smuggled trade to the Baltic in the latter, which has been already noticed,† necessarily required an extended circulation; and the influence of that demand speedily appeared in the enlarged issue of bank-notes, as well as the extraordinary increase in commercial paper discounted at the Bank of England for the whole of that period; the former of which, from fourteen millions in 1808, had risen to twenty-three millions in the beginning of 1811; while the latter, during the same time, had advanced from thirteen to twenty millions. Yet such was the scarcity of specie in Great Britain during these years, in consequence of the absorbing demand which the Austrian and Spanish wars occasioned for the precious metals, that the bullion coined at the Bank during both put together, was little more than six hundred thousand pounds. The immense drain of specie to the Peninsula, to meet the expenses of the war, had gone on progressively increasing, until, in the end of 1810, it had risen to the enormous amount of L.420,000 a-month, or L.5,040,000 a-year. The money thus required could be transmitted only in coin or bullion, as English

1811. Monetary changes during 1809 and 1810.

* See Note B, Appendix. † Ante, VIII. 63.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

paper would not pass in the interior of Spain; and, although Government made the most strenuous exertions to collect specie for the service of the army, yet they could not by all their efforts obtain it in sufficient quantities; and such as they could get was transmitted at a loss, from the exchanges, of nearly thirty per cent. The demand for specie on the Continent, during and before the Austrian war, had been such, that gold had almost entirely disappeared from circulation, both in France and Germany; and even silver could hardly be procured in sufficient quantities to meet the ordinary necessities either of Government or the people.[1]

[1] Well. Desp. April 15, 1810. Gurw. vi. 37, and vi. 155, 168; and May 16, 1810, vi. 116, and June 6, 1810. Bign. ii. 46.

This singular and anomalous state of matters naturally and strongly roused the attention at once of Government, the commercial classes, and all thinking men in Great Britain at this period. The simultaneous occurrence of a vast increase of foreign trade and domestic industry, with a proportional augmentation of the paper currency, and the total disappearance of specie of every kind from circulation, was a phenomenon so extraordinary, that it attracted, as well it might, the anxious attention of the Legislature. A committee was appointed to enquire into and report on the subject, in the Session of 1810; and it embraced many of the ablest men, on both sides of politics, who then sat in Parliament. MR HORNER, whose premature and lamented death, some years afterwards, alone prevented him from rising to the highest eminence on the Opposition side, was the chairman, and took the leading share in the preparation of the memorable report which the committee prepared on the subject. But Mr Canning and MR HUSKISSON were also among its members; and in the intimate connexion which took place be-

Impression it produced in the Legislature.

Feb. 1, 1810.

tween these eminent men on both sides of politics, during the long and arduous examinations of evidence in the course of their investigations, is to be found the first appearance and unobserved spring of an element in the financial and commercial policy of Great Britain, attended with consequences of unbounded importance in the future history of the British empire. The opinions of the majority of the Committee were embodied in certain resolutions, moved by Mr Horner, its chairman, which were strenuously supported by the whole Whig party; while those of the minority, which were entertained also by Government, were embraced in counter-resolutions, brought forward by Mr Vansittart, and backed by all the strength of the Administration.[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xv. 270. Ann. Reg. 1811, 43.

On the part of the Opposition, it was urged by Mr Huskisson, Mr Horner, and, with one exception,* by Mr Canning:—"The facts on which the present question hinges are sufficiently ascertained, and cannot be disputed on the other side. It appears, from the evidence which was laid before the Committee, that, under the existing laws in force anterior to the period of the Bank restriction, no contract or undertaking could be legally satisfied, unless the coin rendered in payment shall weigh in the proportion of

Arguments in favour of the Bullion Report by Mr Horner and Mr Huskisson.

* Mr Canning, in general, coincided with the whole views of Mr Huskisson and the majority of the Bullion Committee; and he supported their principles in a speech of uncommon power and singularly lucid argument. But he dissented from them upon one very material practical point, viz. the *period* which it was expedient Parliament should fix for the resumption of cash payments. The Committee reported in favour of an unconditional resumption in two years from the time of the debate, (May 1811;) and Mr Huskisson and Mr Horner strenuously contended for that period; but Mr Canning deprecated so sudden a return to a cash standard during the continuance of hostilities, and in lieu proposed that it should take place at the term of six months after a general peace, to which it stood at that time by law limited.—See *Parl. Deb.* xix. 1115–1126.

CHAP. LX. 1810.

$\frac{220}{21}$ parts of 5 pennyweights, 8 grains of standard gold, for each pound sterling; nor in silver coin for any sum exceeding £25, unless such coin shall weigh in the proportion of $\frac{220}{62}$ parts of a pound troy of standard silver for each pound sterling. When it was enacted by the authority of Parliament in 1797, that the payment of the promissory-notes of the Bank of England should be suspended, it was not the intention of the Legislature that any alteration should take place in the value of such promissory-notes; but it now appears that the actual value of the promissory-notes of the Bank of England, measuring such value by weight of standard gold and silver, has, for a considerable period, been much less than what is established by law as the legal tender in payment of any money contract; that the fall which has thus taken place in the value of Bank of England notes, has been occasioned by a too redundant issue of paper currency both by the Bank of England and the country banks; and that the excess has originated in the want of that check on the issues of the Bank of England, which existed before the suspension of cash payments.

"The exchanges with foreign countries have, for a considerable period, been unfavourable to this country in the highest degree. But although the adverse circumstances of our trade, and the large amount of our military expenditure abroad, may have contributed to turn our exchanges with the continent of Europe against us; yet the extraordinary degree in which they have been depressed for so long a period, can have arisen only from the depreciation which has arisen in the relative value of the currency, as compared with the money of foreign countries. The only way of guarding against these

manifold dangers, is by a vigilant watch being kept up by the Bank of England on the foreign exchanges, as well as the price of bullion, with a view to regulate the amount of its issues. But the only certain mode of providing against an excess of paper currency, is by establishing by law the legal convertibility upon demand of all such currency into the lawful coin of the realm. It may not be expedient to make such a change suddenly, but it must be done erelong; and two years appears to be a reasonable time within which the alteration may with safety be effected, instead of the period of six months after the ratification of a definite treaty of peace, which is established at present by law.

"The necessity of having recourse to such a measure is obvious. A pound of gold, and £46 : 14 : 6 being equal to each other, and in fact the same thing under different names, any circulating medium which purports to represent that amount of silver ought by law to be exchangeable at will for a pound of gold. But under the operation of the Bank Restriction Act, a pound of gold has now come to be equivalent to £56 in paper currency. The difference, therefore, between £56 and £46 : 14 : 6, or £9 : 5 : 6, is the measure of the depreciation of the currency, or the amount which every creditor in an old obligation, dated prior to the year 1797, to the extent of £56, loses, if his debtor now pays up his debt in the paper currency—that is to say, every creditor of that standing loses just a fifth by the present state of matters. It would be monstrous to imagine that so gross an injustice ever was intended by Parliament when they established as a temporary measure, and under the pressure of unavoidable necessity, the currency of Bank paper as a legal tender. What could

CHAP. LX. 1810.

have been the consistency of the legislature, which, leaving unrepealed and unmodified the regulations which take away the character of a legal tender from every guinea weighing less than the legal standard of 5 dwts. 8 grains, should give it to a bank-note, purporting to be of the same denomination, but the real value of which at this moment is only 4 dwts. 14 grains, or in other words, about three shillings *less* than the lightest guinea which is allowed to pass in payment? Yet this is precisely what the Act of 1797 has now come in practice to produce; and the question is, whether this anomalous and unjust state of matters can be allowed to continue? To sell or to buy guineas at a higher rate than 21s. each, in bank paper, is an offence at present punishable by fine and imprisonment; but though the penalties attach to the unhappy holder of a *heavy* guinea, the fortunate possessor of a *light* one is entitled by law to sell it for what it will bring, which is about 24s. 3d. Can there be a more absurd state of matters, or one more directly operating as a bounty on clipping, defacing, and melting down the coin; and need it be wondered at, if, with such temptations held out by the operation of law to the commission of these offences, the gold coin has entirely disappeared from circulation?

"By the common consent of mankind in all civilized countries, the precious metals have been received as the fittest standard for measuring the value of all other commodities, and are employed as the universal equivalent for effecting their exchange. Gold in this country, as silver is in Hamburgh, is really and exclusively the fixed measure of the rising and the falling of all other commodities in reference to each other. The article itself which forms this

standard, never can rise or fall in value with reference to this measure—that is, with reference *to itself*. A pound weight of gold never can be worth a pound and a quarter of gold. A bank-note, on the other hand, is not a commodity—it is only an engagement for the payment of a certain specified quantity of money. It cannot vary its value in exchange for any commodity, except in reference to the increase or diminution of such commodity in gold. Gold, therefore, is the test by which the value of bank-notes must be tried; and if a bank-note, as stated by the witnesses in the evidence, instead of being worth the standard value of 5 dwts. 3 grains of gold, is only worth 4 dwts. 8 grains—it is really worth only the latter amount of gold in exchange for any other commodity. A general increase of prices, therefore, is not an indication of the depreciation of its currency. Such an effect may be produced by many other causes, as for example, an increase in the supply of the precious metals; but every considerable or durable increase in the price of the precious metals, which form the basis of a currency, cannot be ascribed to any thing but the depreciation of such currency, even if the price of all other commodities were to be falling at the same time.

"Depreciation of a currency may be produced either by the standard coin containing less of the precious metal which forms that standard, than it is certified by law to contain, or by an excess in the amount of that currency. The first effect took place to a great extent in the reign of William III., when the quantity of precious metals in the current coin was about thirty *per cent* less than it was certified to contain. To that evil a remedy was applied by the re-coinage in 1773, and since that time this evil has

CHAP. LX. 1810.

not been felt in this country. The existing depreciation, therefore, must be occasioned by excess. Such depreciation cannot exist for any length of time in any country, unless its currency consists partly of paper, partly of the precious metals. If the coin itself be undepreciated but nevertheless the currency is so, which is the present case, that can arise only from an excess in the paper circulating at par with the coin. The necessary effect of such a state of things is, that gold will be sent abroad to the better markets which are there to be found. And the only possible way of applying a remedy to this evil is to compel the Bank to pay in gold, and give the market price for guineas. By so doing, indeed, you will at first subject that establishment to a loss equal to the difference between the market and the mint price of that metal; but the effect of this will be in the end, to force it to contract its issues, and restore the value of the currency; and, till that is done, whatever it gains by avoiding this liability, is just so much lost to the holders of its notes."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xix. 798; 1098. Huskisson's Speeches, i. 57, 123.

Argument against it by the Ministerial party.

On the other hand it was maintained by Mr Vansittart, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr Perceval:—"It is a matter of equal regret and surprise to behold a Committee, composed of gentlemen so sagacious and well-informed, so conversant in business, and respectable in every point of view, arrive at conclusions so very opposite to those which the evidence before the Committee, as well as the good sense of the nation, has long since pointed out for general adoption. The last resolution is the substantial practical recommendation of the Bullion Committee; the other resolutions are only explanatory and introductory, and might, with perfect innocence and safety, be placed unanimously on the journals. It is the resumption of cash pay-

ments, within a definite and not distant period, which is the real point at issue; and all argument is misapplied which is not directed in the first, as well as last instance, to that leading point. We are all agreed that a mixed circulation of bank-notes, convertible at pleasure into cash and coin, is the most desirable circulating medium which can be conceived; because, if properly regulated, it possesses the solidity of a metallic with the cheapness of a paper currency. We differ only about the means, and the fit season, for returning to this state. The Bullion Committee are for attempting it positively and absolutely, without regard to consequences, or even practicability: we are for waiting till a violent and unnatural state of things shall have ceased, during the continuance of which our object cannot be gained, while the attempt would only aggravate the evil.

"The foundation of all our reasonings on this subject must be an appeal to experience; and the resolutions which we are to submit to the House are, therefore, not abstract propositions, but a statement of facts. The fundamental position on the other side, viz. that there is a certain fixed and definite standard of value arising from a given weight and purity of the precious metals being used in the formation of coin in this country, is erroneous. Any sum under L.25 may, it is notorious, be legally discharged in silver coin; and such is the degree in which the silver coin of various denominations now current has been worn away by use, or diminished by fraud, that the actual amount of silver which a creditor holding an obligation under that sum will receive, may vary from 5 lbs. 5 oz. 15 dwt. to 8 lbs. 15 dwt., according as he receives his payment in the worn sixpence or the fresh crown-pieces of the

CHAP. LX. 1811.

realm. The Act of 1774, limiting the legal tender of silver to sums below L.25, expired in 1783, and from that time down to 1798, obligations to any amount might have been discharged in these clipped and worn out sixpences, then current: and such coins are still in practice the great circulating medium by which the transactions of the country are carried on. Even in regard to the gold coin, no fixed standard was introduced till 1774; so that all the boasted fixity of that part of the currency dates only from that comparatively recent period.

"The right of establishing and regulating the legal money of the kingdom, at all times vested in the sovereign or the crown, with concurrence of Parliament, cannot be abrogated but by the same authority. The promissory-notes of the Bank of England, however, have hitherto passed in common estimation, and in the usual transactions of men, as equivalent to gold; although at various periods, both before and after the Bank restriction, the exchanges between Great Britain and other countries have been unfavourable to Great Britain; and, as a matter of course, in such periods the market prices of gold and silver have risen considerably above the mint prices, and the coinage of money at the mint has been unavoidably either partially or wholly suspended. Such unfavourable exchanges and rises in the price of bullion have usually occurred in the course of foreign wars, when the metallic currency was all carried abroad to conduct the operations of our fleets and armies; as during the wars of William III. and Queen Anne, the greater part of the Seven Years' War, and the American war. These causes all conspired together to produce the extraordinary pressure upon the Bank in February 1797, and rendered unavoidable the suspension of cash payments

at that period: and they again occurred with still greater severity in the two years which preceded the peace of Amiens. In these instances, the unfavourable state of the exchanges, and the high price of bullion, do not appear to have been produced by the restriction of cash payments, or any excess in the issue of notes; inasmuch as all the instances, except the last, occurred previously to any restriction on such cash payments; and because the price of bullion has frequently been highest, and the exchanges most unfavourable, at periods when the issues of the bank-notes have been considerably diminished, and they have been afterwards restored to their ordinary rates though those issues have been increased.

"During seventy-eight years, ending with January 1797, the price of gold has been at and under the mint price for twenty-eight years, and above the mint price fifty years; and during that period the price of standard silver has been at and under the mint price three years and two months only. The exchange with Hamburg fell, during the three latter years of the American war, full eight per cent, and the price of foreign gold rose from L.3, 17s. to L.4, 2s. an ounce, and the price of dollars nearly in the same proportion; while the bank-notes in circulation were, during the same period, diminished from nine to six millions. Again, in December 1804, the rate of exchange with Hamburg rapidly rose to 34, and the price of gold fell to its former standard of L.3, 17s. before February 1787. The amount of bank-notes in February 1787, was L.8,600,000, and in February 1791, L.11,700,000; and between these years the sum of L.10,700,000 was coined in gold, and yet the exchange with Hamburg rose three per cent. The bank-notes, which in February 1795 were L.11,500,000, were reduced

CHAP. LX. 1811.

in February 1797 to L.8,600,000, during which time the exchange with Hamburg fell three per cent; and on the 1st February 1798, they were increased to L.13,200,000, during which period the exchange had risen nine per cent. Examples of this sort prove to a demonstration how extremely fallacious is the idea that the unfavourable state of the foreign exchanges is to be ascribed to any excess in the issues of paper at home: they show that the exchanges depend on a variety of other circumstances independent of the home currency, and not unfrequently they are highest when the paper circulation is most abundant.

"It is not difficult to perceive what are the circumstances, in our foreign relations, which have produced the present unfavourable state of the exchanges. The trade with the Continent has, from the effect of Napoleon's decrees against British commerce, become hazardous, precarious, and expensive; it is every where loaded with excessive charges: the trade with America has been precarious and interrupted; the naval and military expenditure has for some years been very great; and the price of grain, owing to a succession of bad crops, has during the same period been very high. Any one of these causes is sufficient to account for the drain of specie from this country, much more the whole taken together.

"The amount of the currency of the country must bear a certain proportion to its trade, revenue, and expenditure. Now, the average amount of exports, imports, and revenue of England, for some years past, has been so great as absolutely to require an enlarged circulation; for all the three have nearly doubled since the period when the Bank restrictions were first imposed. If the average amount of bank-

notes in circulation at the two periods is compared, it will be found not to have advanced in the same proportion.* And how, when our metallic currency was drawn abroad by the necessities of foreign commerce and warfare, was the ordinary circulation of the country to be supplied, and its immense transactions conducted, if the increase in bank-notes, now so loudly complained of, had not taken place?

"The extraordinary circumstances in which the kingdom has lately been placed, therefore, are amply sufficient to account for the unfavourable state of the exchanges, without any change in the internal value of the currency, or any reason being afforded for its contraction. It is highly important, indeed, that the restriction as to payments in cash should be removed as soon as the political and commercial relations of the country shall render it compatible with the public interest; but under the present situation of the state, in all these particulars, it would be highly dangerous to do so before the period fixed by law, namely, six months after the conclusion of a definitive treaty of peace.

"There is a depreciation of bank-notes compared with legal coin, and there is a depreciation compared with the price of commodities. But the depreciation on which the Bullion Report so largely dwells, is a depreciation different from either of these. It is a depreciation compared with the money of other

* Average exports and imports of Great Britain 3 years before Feb. 1797, £48,732,000 1811, £77,981,000
Expenditure, . . 42,855,000 82,205,000
Bank-notes, . . . 10,782,000 19,541,000
No less than L.57,000,000 worth of gold coin had been coined during the reign of George III., of which a large portion was in circulation at the first of these periods, but a very small portion only at the second. —*See* MR VANSITTART'S *Resolution, May* 13, 1811, *Parl. Deb.* xx. 73, 74.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

countries. What is the meaning of such a depreciation, when no one ever imagined that Bank of England paper could pass current any where but in Great Britain? What would be the effect of an order upon the Bank just now to resume cash payments in two years? Would it not be to compel them to purchase gold coin at any loss, in order to meet the certain drain about to come upon them? All the witnesses examined before the Committee agree in this, that there is an irresistible tendency at present in the guineas of England to go abroad. Some ascribe it to the necessity of cash remittances to meet the balance of trade, others to the demand for gold on the continent; but all concur in the fact, and the state of the foreign exchanges sufficiently demonstrates its reality. How, then, is the Bank of England to be able singly to stand the torrent produced by the commercial and political relations of the whole globe? Is it fair, equitable, or prudent, to expose that establishment to the certainty of the enormous loss consequent on such a contest? And is this a time to make an experiment so hazardous to the solvency of Government and the credit of the nation, when the empire is engaged in the eighteenth year of a costly war, waged for its very existence, and every guinea that can be spared from its domestic necessities is absolutely requisite to maintain the expensive contest in the Peninsula, which alone averts the horrors of invasion from the British shores?"

Upon a division, Mr Horner's resolutions were lost by a majority of 76—the numbers being 75 to 151; and the counter-resolutions of Mr Vansittart were, a few days after, carried by a majority of 40—the numbers being 42 to 82.[1]

[1] Mr Vansittart's Resolutions, May 13. 1811. Parl. Deb. xx. 73, 74; xix. 919, 967.

Few subjects in the modern history of England

1811.

have been discussed both in and out of Parliament with more vehemence and ability than this Bullion Report; and none was ever fraught, both in its immediate and ultimate effects, with more momentous consequences. In fact, the very existence of the nation was at stake in the discussion; and it may now with safety be pronounced, that if the arguments urged by Mr Horner, Mr Huskisson, and the Bullion Committee, had proved successful, and Parliament had acted upon their recommendations, the national independence must have been destroyed, and England rendered a province of France long before the Moscow catastrophe arrived. The very fact on which their whole argument was rested, viz. that the difference between the market and the mint price of guineas had come to be 25 per cent, was decisive against the practicability of restoring cash payments, at least till the pressure of the war had come to an end; for what must have been the effect of a compulsitor to pay in gold purchased by the Bank at such a loss, and issued to the public at such a profit? Evident ruin to that establishment, bankruptcy to the Government, and an abandonment of all our enterprises, vital to the state, in which the empire was engaged. Wellington, deprived of all his pecuniary resources in Spain, would have been compelled to withdraw from the Peninsula, in the mortal struggle between insolvency at home and disaster abroad. All our foreign efforts must have been abandoned. A force as great as that which drew back Hannibal from the scenes of his triumphs in Italy, would have forced the British hero from the theatre of his destined triumphs in Spain. The crash in England would have come precisely at the crisis of the war; cash payments would have been resumed in May 1813, just after the battle of

May 9, 1811. 1 Parl. Deb xix. 1128, and xx. 126

Reflections on this subject.

Dangers of resumption of cash payments at this period.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

Lutzen, and on the eve of the armistice of Prague; Napoleon, relieved from the pressure of Wellington's veterans, would have made head against the forces of the north; Austria, in such unpromising circumstances, would never have joined the coalition; Russia, exhausted and discouraged, would have retired to her forests; Germany, unarrayed by British subsidies, would have remained dormant in the strife; and the sun of European freedom would have sunk, perhaps for ever, beneath the wave of Gallic ambition.

Even if, by prudential measures and great efforts on the part of the Government and the Bank, an immediate catastrophe had been avoided, there can be no doubt that the resumption of cash payments at that crisis must, at no distant period, have proved fatal to the finances and public credit of Great Britain. Experience has now cast a broad and steady light on this subject. It is known that the adoption of this step in 1819, enforced and carried out as it was by the suppression of small notes in 1826, changed prices at least 33 per cent; that the holders of commodities and property of all descriptions found their capital diminished by that amount in the course of a few years; that debts, augmented in the same proportion, speedily proved fatal to all the labouring fortunes, whether in land or money, over the country; that bankruptcies, to an unparalleled extent, diffused ruin and misery through the industrious classes; and that the general distress and difficulties of the middle ranks of society produced that wide-spread feeling of discontent, which, ignorant of the real cause of its suffering, and fanned into a flame by the spirit of faction, gave rise to the conflagration which brought about the great organic change in 1832. If such have been the effects of

this momentous step in a period of profound peace, universal commerce, and comparatively light national burdens, what must have been its results if it had occurred in the crisis of the war, and in the presence of Napoleon, with the income-tax forcibly extracting all the surplus profits of the people, commerce to continental Europe almost closed by the military power of France, and a gigantic naval and military establishment exhausting all the resources of the state, and yet alone preserving the nation from foreign subjugation?

Errors of Mr Huskisson and his party.

The fundamental error of Mr Huskisson and the Bullion Committee on this subject, consisted in the principles, which they laid down as axioms, that the measure of the depreciation of the currency was to be found in the difference between the market and the mint price of gold; and that the cause of the high price of the precious metals was to be sought for in the over issue of paper, rather than the absorption of specie in foreign states. Both positions, it has now been proved by experience, were erroneous, or rather embraced only a part of the truth; and, what is singular enough, the first erred chiefly from underrating the depreciation arising from excessive issue, on which the Bullion Committee themselves so strongly founded. Assuming the depreciation to be measured by the difference between the market and the mint price of gold, they estimated it at 25 per cent, whereas there can be no doubt that it was at that period nearer 75 per cent; and a revulsion of prices in most articles, to nearly half that amount, took place upon the resumption of cash payments when the bill of 1819 came into operation. In fact, the relative money and mint price of the precious metals had nothing to do with the question of depreciation of the currency; for, as bank-notes never sunk in value compared

CHAP. LX. 1811.

with specie, whatever party-spirit may have affirmed to the contrary, the measure of the depreciation which undoubtedly took place was to be sought for, not in the relative value of the metallic and paper currency, but in the diminished value of the *whole currency*, gold, silver, and paper, when compared with that of all other commodities; and the proof of that was to be found in the fact, not that gold was at a premium of 25 per cent, but that wheat had, on an average of ten years preceding, advanced 100 per cent, and was then selling at 110 shillings the quarter. The high premium on gold, on which so much stress was laid, was evidently owing to the political or natural causes which, at that period, caused the precious metals to be all drained out of the country; and we who have seen the Bank of England reel, and the United States Bank of America fall,* under the effects of the drain of £6,000,000 sterling from the vaults of the former of these establishments to purchase grain from continental Europe in 1839, for the consumption of the British islands, can feel no surprise that gold was at an extravagant premium in 1810 and 1811 in London, when L.4,171,000 was, in the former of these years, sent out of the country for grain alone; and in both years, above L.6,000,000 was annually remitted to the Peninsula, in specie and bullion, for the service of the English and Portuguese armies.

It is remarkable that a measure fraught, as every one now sees, with such obvious and utter ruin both

* In Mr Biddle's able paper on the causes of the suspension of cash payments by the United States Bank in October 1839, the principal reason assigned was the drain upon the Bank of England during the preceding year, from the vast importation of grain, in consequence of the bad harvest in Great Britain in 1838, and the consequent contraction of the British circulating medium, and pressure upon the money market of America.

to the nation and the individuals of whom it is composed, was at that period supported by the ablest men in Parliament, and many of the profoundest thinkers in the country; that the report which recommended such a perilous and destructive change was for above twenty years held up as the model of political wisdom; and that the Ministry who, by resisting it, saved their country from destruction, more perhaps than by any act in their whole career, incurred the imputation, with the great bulk of the succeeding generation, of being behind the lights of the age. It is the more remarkable that the general delusion should so long have prevailed on the subject, when it is recollected, not only that the true principles of this apparently difficult but really simple branch of national economy, which are now generally admitted, were at the moment most ably expounded by many men both in and out of Parliament;* and that, in the examination of some of the leading merchants of London before the parliamentary committees on the subject, the truth was told with a force and a precision which it appears now surprising how any one could resist.† This memorable example should always be present to the minds of all who are called upon, either theoretically or practically, to deal with so momentous a subject as the monetary concerns of a nation; and, while it is calculated to

Long-continued public delusion on this subject.

* Particularly by Sir John Sinclair, whose sagacious mind early and clearly perceived the fatal effect of the proposed resumption of cash payments at that critical period, especially on that great national interest, agriculture, to the support and improvement of which his long and useful life was devoted.—See *Life of Sir John Sinclair*, ii. 268, by his son, the Rev. John Sinclair, chaplain to the Bishop of London; a work full of valuable information both historical and political, by an author who unites to the talents and industry hereditary in his family, the accomplishments of a scholar, the learning of a divine, and the philanthropy of a Christian.

† See note C, in Appendix.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

inspire distrust in abstract or speculative conclusions, when unsupported by facts, it points in the clearest manner to the wisdom of adhering to those common-sense views which experience has suggested to practical men, and which, however apparently irreconcilable at the moment to speculative principle, will generally be found to emanate from it in the end, and to have arisen from some unobserved element acting, with a force imperceptible to the philosopher but most cogent to the merchant, on the great and complicated maze of human transactions.

Birth and early history of Mr Huskisson.

WILLIAM HUSKISSON, who first rose to great and deserved celebrity in the course of these important discussions, was a statesman whose career belongs to the pacific but momentous period which intervened between the close of the war and the passing of the Reform Bill; but he was too eminent a man, and exercised too powerful an influence on the fortunes of his country, to be passed over without remark in the annals of Europe during the French Revolution. He was descended from a family of ancient standing but moderate fortune in Staffordshire, and received the elements of education in his native county. He was early sent over to receive the more advanced branches of instruction at Paris, under the direction of Dr Gem, physician to the British Embassy at that metropolis; and he arrived there in 1789, just in time to witness, and in some degree share, the enthusiasm excited by the capture of the Bastile in that year. The intimate acquaintance which at this period he formed with Franklin and Jefferson, as well as the popular leaders in the Club of 1789, of which he was a member, had a powerful influence on his character, which was never obliterated through life, and eventually no inconsiderable effect on the fortunes of his country, to the chief direction of the

commercial concerns of which his great abilities ultimately raised him. He was first brought into Parliament in the close of the year 1796, for the borough of Morpeth, under the nomination of Lord Carlisle, and about the same time appointed Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, in which laborious and important situation his business talents were speedily discovered, and he enjoyed the intimate friendship, and was often called to the private counsels, both of Mr Dundas and Mr Pitt. He retired from office with Mr Pitt in 1801, along with Mr Canning, with whom, throughout life, he maintained the closest intimacy; but was re-instated in the situation of Secretary to the Treasury on Mr Pitt's return to power in 1804; which important trust he continued to hold, with the exception of the brief period when the Whigs were in power, down to the retirement of Mr Canning from Downing Street in September 1809, when he withdrew from Government with his brilliant friend, and became a leading member of the liberal section of the Tory party, now in avowed hostility to the Administration. In 1814 he was appointed a Commissioner of the Woods and Forests, and from that time till his appointment to the important office of President of the Board of Trade in January 1823, he devoted his attention almost exclusively to subjects of trade, navigation, and political economy, in which his vast information gave him great weight, and of which, even before he became a cabinet minister, he had acquired almost the exclusive direction. The return to cash payments, by the celebrated Bill of 1819, the reciprocity treaties, and abandonment of the navigation laws, and the free-trade system, were mainly occasioned by his influence; and he continued, whether in or out of office, almost entirely to direct the commercial concerns of the nation, till

CHAP. LX. 1811.

the time of his death, which was occasioned by the frightful accident of the railway train passing over his body on the day on which the line from Liverpool to Manchester was first opened, on 15th September 1830.[1]

[1] Huskisson's Memoirs, i. 235, Speeches and Life, vol. i.

His character and great abilities.

He was the first of that class of statesmen who have arisen with the prodigious increase in the commercial transactions and industrial activity of Great Britain in later times, and whose attention is chiefly devoted to the material interests and statistical details of the nation. He was not endowed by nature with any remarkable oratorical abilities; he had great powers of thought and application, but neither the fire of genius nor the soul of poetry in his character; and though in the later years of his life he was listened to with profound attention on both sides of the House, yet this respect was owing rather to the vast stores of varied information which he never failed to bring to bear upon the subject of debate, and the luminous views which he advanced regarding it, than any faculty of captivating a mixed audience with which he was gifted. His reasoning faculties were of a very high order; and there is no statesman of that period to whose arguments the historian can now so well refer for an exposition of the principles which, during the interval between the peace and the Reform Bill, governed the commercial and maritime policy of England. He first brought to bear upon legislative measures the resources of statistical research; and, to the industry and perseverance requisite for such an undertaking, he united the rarer faculty of philosophic reflection, and the deduction of general principles from an immense detail of particular instances. He was never taken unawares on any subject of that description; the details of the parliamentary returns were ever pre-

sent to his memory; and, by the skilful use which he made of them in debate, he acquired, for the last ten years of his career, a weight in the House of Commons on all subjects connected with trade and navigation which was wellnigh irresistible. CHAP. LX. 1811.

Adam Smith has said that he had no great faith in political arithmetic; and although nothing is more certain than that the principles of the Baconian philosophy will be found in the end to be applicable to this, as to every other subject of human enquiry, and that a careful examination of facts is the only sure test of the truth or falsehood of any particular opinion, yet here, as elsewhere, principle must be the guide to enquiry; it is only by persons thoroughly imbued with rational views that these valuable results can be obtained; while to the world in general statistical returns will present an unmeaning mass of figures, and to the speculative politician they may often become a fruitful source of error. Statistics are to the science of politics what the observations of Tycho Brahe were to astronomy; but it requires the mind of a Kepler to deduce from them the true philosophic conclusions. The reason is, not that the returns are incorrect, or the figures err, but that such a variety of circumstances enter into the formation of the general result, that the chances are, that, in the outset of statistical enquiry, and before the true causes have been separated from the imaginary ones by experience, conclusions altogether fallacious will often be deduced from perfectly correct premises. Certain it is, that with all the accuracy and extent of Mr Huskisson's information on mercantile subjects, and all the force of his reasoning powers, his conclusions were in great part erroneous; and that to his influence, more perhaps His errors.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

than that of any other individual, is to be ascribed the false direction of British policy for the last twenty years, alike in regard to monetary, commercial, and colonial affairs. Experience, the great test of truth, has now demonstrated this in the most decisive manner.

His erroneous political principles, and their destructive effects.

He strenuously advocated the return to a metallic currency in 1819, before any serious progress had been made in the reduction of the debt contracted during the paper one; and the result has been that the nation has been permanently disabled from paying it off; and the fall in the money price of all property to the extent of a third, produced such a storm of discontent as overthrew the old constitution of the empire. He strenuously advocated the conclusion of reciprocity navigation treaties with the powers of northern Europe; and the result has been that our shipping with them has been reduced in fifteen years to a fourth of its amount, while theirs with us has been quadrupled in the same period, without any advantage whatever having been gained for our manufacturing interests to counterbalance so serious a disadvantage. He strenuously advocated the reduction of the duties on various articles of foreign manufacture; and the result has been that a severe wound has been inflicted on domestic industry, without foreign jealousy having in so much as a single instance relaxed aught of the burdens on British productions. He strenuously advocated the propitiation of foreign mercantile powers in the same stage of civilisation as ourselves, even if the consequence should be the discouragement and irritation of our own colonies; and the result has been, without the slightest relaxation of their prohibitions, a general neglect of those vast

colonial interests in which Great Britain can alone find a permanent market for its manufactures, and which, according as they are attached by durable cords to the parent state, or severed from it, must ultimately become either an unbounded source of its strength, or the immediate cause of its ruin.* CHAP. LX. 1811.

Another subject which occupied a large portion of the attention of Parliament during the years 1811 and 1812, was the repeal of the Orders in Council, which was now anxiously pressed upon Government, both by the Opposition and the principal manufacturing cities in the empire; and in which a statesman, reserved for the highest destinies in future days, HENRY BROUGHAM, first rose to distinguished eminence. Debates on the repeal of the Orders in Council.

It has been already noticed that the British Government—justly irritated at the Berlin and Milan decrees, which Napoleon, in the intoxication consequent on the overthrow of Prussia in 1806, had fulminated against English commerce—issued the celebrated Orders in Council, which in effect declared that no ship belonging to any neutral power should be permitted to enter the ports of any country under the government of France, unless it had previously touched at a British harbour.† Between these rigorous orders on the one hand, and the peremptory French decrees on the other, the trade of neutral states was wellnigh destroyed; for they had no means of avoiding the penalty of confiscation, denounced against them by the one power, but by adopting a course which immediately exposed them to the same risk from the other. The only neutral power which at this period carried on any considerable carrying trade was America; but it did so to a great extent, and that commerce promised daily to State of the question so far as neutral powers were concerned.

* See note D, Appendix. † *Ante*, VI. 339, 340.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

become greater and more profitable to its citizens, from the mutual rage of the belligerents, which threw the only traffic which could be maintained between them into the hands of the only neutral state in existence. Deeply, therefore, did both the people and Government of the United States feel themselves injured by these acts on the part of France and England; and, in despair of bringing either of these powers back to a more reasonable and civilized species of hostility, they had recourse to measures calculated to withdraw from any intercourse with either. A general embargo was first laid on all American shipping within their harbours, which was soon after succeeded by a Non-intercourse Act, which prohibited all intercourse between the United States and either France or England. The particulars of these acts, and the abortive diplomatic efforts which were made to re-establish a good understanding between the two nations, will be given in the sequel of this work.* Suffice it to say, that the Non-intercourse Act continued in force through the whole of 1810 and 1811, and that the cessation of all exports to the United States, which then took off British produce and manufactures to the extent of no less than thirteen millions sterling, powerfully contributed both to the extraordinary falling-off in the exports of the latter of these years, and to the general discontent and suffering in the manufacturing districts, which have been already noticed.† Committees were appointed to take evidence on the subject early in 1812 in both Houses of Parliament; and their members, among whom Mr Brougham, Mr Baring, and Mr Huskisson took the lead, exerted themselves with extraordinary vigour in prosecuting

Jan. 17, 1809.

Feb. 6, 1809.

* *Infra*, ch. lxxi. † *Ante*, VIII. p. 63.

the enquiry. A great number of petitions against the Orders in Council, chiefly from the large manufacturing towns interested in the trade with America, were presented. Early in June the subject came on for discussion in the House of Commons, and the debates which followed were of the utmost importance, as illustrating the real effect, on the national interests, of the extraordinary species of warfare in which the empire was now engaged.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1810, 253, 260; and 1812, 91, 92. Bign. ix. 309, 319.

On the part of the Opposition, it was argued with uncommon ability by Mr Brougham, Mr Baring, and Mr Ponsonby:—"The question at issue, though one of unexampled importance, is of very little intricacy; the evidence is of immense extent and apparently interminable details; but a few minutes' debate must be sufficient to demonstrate where the only safe or honourable path is to be found. The table of the House has groaned under the mass of petitions presented—the hearts of the members have been harrowed by the details of general suffering which have been established in evidence. Numerous disorders in different parts of the country have arisen out of this general distress; it has even driven large bodies of men to the absurd expedient of endeavouring to revive an obsolete law of Elizabeth, for magistrates fixing the rate of wages; while the more enlightened sufferers under the restrictions of the times, have sought some relief in what would prove a most inadequate remedy, the extension of a free trade to India and China. The Potteries have demanded permission to send their porcelain to China; and the ancient and respectable city of Newcastle has earnestly entreated that it may be allowed to ship *coal* for the stoves and hothouses of Calcutta! These various projects, some to a certain extent feasible, others

Argument against the Orders in Council by Mr Brougham.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

utterly absurd and visionary, only prove the magnitude of the evil which is so generally felt, and remind us of the awful accounts of the plague, when, in the vain effort to seek relief, miserable men were seen wildly rushing into the streets, and madly grasping the first passenger they met, to implore his help. The dreadful amount of the present distress is proved by all the witnesses; it comes upon us in a thousand shapes; it exhibits the same never-ending yet ever-varying scene of heart-rending suffering. The wants of the poor have been proved to be so pressing, that they have been forced to part with their whole little stock of furniture; pawn their blankets, their beds, their very clothes off their backs; and the prodigious mass of moveable articles thus brought at once into the market, has produced a decided depression upon prices even in the London market. Great as was the general distress during the scarcity of 1800 and 1801, it is described by a host of witnesses as having been as nothing compared to that which now prevails: for then there was a want only of provisions, but wages were high and employment abundant; whereas now the want of money meets and aggravates the want of food.

"The returns of exports and imports during the last two years completely account for this extraordinary woe. Nay, they exhibit a decay in national industry, which might have been expected to produce a still more heart-rending and wide-spread suffering. Comparing the whole amount of trade, both exports and imports, (which is the only fair way of reckoning,) there is a falling off, compared with 1809, of thirty-six millions, with 1810 of thirty-eight. In British manufactures alone, the decline from 1809 to 1811 is sixteen millions—taking in colonial produce,

it is no less than twenty-four millions as compared with 1809, and twenty-seven as compared with 1810. This reduction is unparalleled in British annals; it outstrips all the efforts of financiers or treasury-clerks to conceal, and stands forth an imperishable monument of the infatuation in the policy of the Government which has brought such calamities on the nation.

"It is in vain to talk of substitutes for the North American trade, the loss of which has been the main cause of these grievous evils. The Brazil market, the South American market, have been tried, and both have terminated in nothing but disappointment. We neither know their wants nor do they require our manufactures. The smuggling trade to the United Provinces through Canada at first afforded some relief; but, since the continuance of our prohibitory system has exasperated the North American population, even this resource has failed us. As a necessary consequence of this total stoppage of all our best foreign markets, the home trade has become depressed in a most remarkable degree. Goods of all sorts, destined for the consumption of foreign states, have been thrown back upon the home market from inability to find any extraneous vent for our manufactures; and then the diminution in the amount of our exports, great as it is, affords an inadequate representation of the real depression of our industry; for it frequently has happened that goods, which had paid duty as exports, and even crossed the Atlantic, have been thrown back upon our own market, and sold at a ruinous loss to all concerned, for domestic consumption. It is in vain, therefore, that, in this unexampled depression of our foreign sales, we turn to the home market for relief; for there the magnitude of our external losses has pro-

29681

CHAP. LX. 1812.

duced a ruinous glut; and every effort made to find a vent among our own inhabitants but adds to the general distress.

"Let it be shown, indeed, that the national honour or security is involved in upholding the Orders in Council, and all these arguments go for nothing; nay, it becomes the first duty of every patriot, at any hazard, even that of the total ruin of our manufactures, to concur in their maintenance. But has this been shown to be the case? Nay, is it not evident that their repeal is called for alike by what is due to the national character, and the preservation and stability of our naval power? It is unnecessary, in discussing this question, to go back to the legality or illegality, the justice or injustice, of the paper blockades of long lines of the enemy's coast, to which Napoleon constantly refers the origin of this calamitous species of warfare. Admitting that it may be both just and legal to do so, the question is, Is it *expedient* to assert and enforce such rights at a time when it involves us in such calamities? History proves that, on many occasions, these rights, though never abandoned, have been quietly passed over *sub silentio*, where the assertion of them would have interfered with national interests, or impeded national advantages. This was done at the peace of Utrecht, in the American war, and by express acts of the Government in 1793 and 1794. The point now is, whether this is an occasion when, without surrendering our maritime rights, it is expedient for a time to waive their consideration? Now, what is the commerce which we sacrifice for the vain honour of preserving these rights? Why, it is no less than the vast North American market—a market now taking off thirteen millions' worth of our produce,

and worth, in the estimation of the most competent witnesses, all foreign markets put together. The returns in that market are as sure, the bad debts as few, as in the former trade with Holland. The extent, steadiness, and rapid increase of the trade between England and North America, is easily accounted for. The inhabitants of the United States are connected with us by origin, language, and habits; their tastes go along with their inclinations, and they come to us, as a matter of course, for such manufactured articles as they require. There is not a cabin or loghouse in their vast territory, in which you do not meet with British produce; while the rapid increase of their population, which doubles every thirty years, and in which, nevertheless, there is not a single pauper to be found, offers a boundless field for future increase. It is not a figure of speech, but the simple truth, to assert, that, circumstanced as the two countries are, there is not an axe falls in the woods of America, which does not put in motion some shuttle, or hammer, or wheel in England. It is the miserable, shuffling, doubtful traffic to the north of Europe and the Mediterranean that we prefer to the sure, regular, and increasing North American trade—a trade placed beyond the reach of the enemy's power, and which supports at once all that remains of the liberty of the seas, and gives life and vigour to its main pillar within the realm, the manufactures and commerce of England.

"Look to the other side of the picture. If you continue the cessation of intercourse with America much longer, the inevitable consequence will be, that the Americans will be driven to the necessity of supplying themselves with manufactures. They have the means of doing so within their own bounds:

CHAP. LX. 1812.

coal and water carriage in abundance are to be found in their territory; and the vast fortunes already accumulated in their seaport towns, prove that they are noways deficient in the true commercial spirit. We can have no jealousy of America, whose armies are yet at the plough, or making, since your policy has so willed it, awkward though improving attempts at the loom; whose assembled navies could not lay siege to an English man-of-war. The nation is already deeply embarked in the Spanish war; let us not, then, run the risk of adding another to the already formidable league of our enemies, and reduce ourselves to the necessity of feeding Canada with troops from Portugal, and Portugal with bread from England." [1] *

[1] Parl. Deb. xxiii. 486, 522.

Argument on the other side by the Ministers.

Such was the weight of these arguments, and such the strong foundations which they had in the necessities of the times, and the evidence laid before both Houses of Parliament, that Government made very little resistance to them. It was merely urged by Lord Castlereagh and Mr Rose:—"No question, more vital both to the national security and the commercial interests of the country, ever came before Parliament; and there can be no doubt that a case of grave distress to the manufacturing interest has been made out by the evidence. Nay, there is reason to believe that, if the North American market is not speedily opened, that suffering will be augmented. Even admitting, however, that the repeal of the Orders in Council would occasion the abrogation of the Non-importation Act, still it does by no means follow that the original imposition of these Orders

* The argument of Lord Brougham, of which the preceding sketch is but the skeleton, is one of the ablest and withal soundest pieces of oratorical reasoning in the English language.

was not called for by necessity, and justified by expedience. Is it to be expected that Great Britain is tamely to submit to the iniquitous decrees of France without any retaliation?—without attempting, at least, to inflict upon that state some part of the suffering which it has brought upon this country? As against France, that system has perfectly succeeded; and severely as our commerce has suffered in the struggle, theirs has undergone a still more remarkable diminution. From the official accounts published by the French Government, it appears that, even with their population of nearly forty millions, the total amount of their manufactures for the home market and exportation was only, in 1810, L.54,000,000 sterling; while that of Great Britain and Ireland, with only seventeen millions of souls, was L.66,000,000. With the exception of the year 1811, which was one of great depression, arising from temporary causes, the preceding years, when the Orders in Council were in operation, were periods of extraordinary and unprecedented prosperity. The average of our exports to continental Europe, for three years previous to the issuing of the Orders in Council, was L.17,500,000; that for the three years subsequent, L.23,000,000. Can more decisive proof be imagined that the machinations of the French Emperor for our destruction have not only failed in their object, but recoiled upon himself?

"The hostile feelings of the American Government have now made the Orders in Council a pretext for breaking off all commercial intercourse with this country; and doubtless that interruption is one great cause of the distress in which the mercantile interests are now involved. But such an interruption could

CHAP. LX. 1812.

not have been calculated upon; and, in the ordinary course of human events, it would not have occurred. Reason and equitable feeling should have taught the Americans, that the Orders in Council were adopted by the English Government as a measure of retaliation only; that they were issued subsequent to the Berlin decree, under the pressure of necessity; and if these defensive measures proved, as doubtless they did, injurious in a very high degree to the interests of American commerce, their enmity should have been directed against France, the primary cause of this destructive system of hostility, instead of this country, which merely in its own defence was driven to its adoption.

"Never was a country which, when forced to embrace such a system, evinced a more sincere desire to prosecute it in the way least injurious to neutral powers; an instance of which is to be found in the Order of 1809, limiting the blockade to France and the powers under her immediate control. The License system, when properly understood, was no departure from the principles of the Orders in Council; not a fifth of the licenses issued were intended to evade those Orders; four-fifths were occasioned by the relief which the enemy himself required from the stringent effects of our measures. We did, however, offer to forego all the advantages of the License trade, and revert to the strict measure of 1807, if the Government of the United States would repeal the Non-importation Act; but they have hitherto shown no disposition to embrace such a proposition.

"The Prince Regent long ago issued a declaration, bearing that, as soon as the Berlin and Milan decrees were repealed, the British Government would forthwith withdraw the Orders in Council; and the

French Cabinet has recently communicated to the American Government a resolution apparently consenting to abandon the decrees, if the British orders were at the same time repealed. That declaration, however, is not sufficiently explicit to enable the English Cabinet to act upon the assurance it contains; in particular, it appears to be virtually abrogated by the sweeping declaration of the Duke of Bassano, that the Berlin and Milan decrees should remain in full force till the maritime assumptions of this country were abandoned. But the British Government is fully disposed to receive the olive branch tendered, whether in good or doubtful faith, by the French ruler; she is willing for a time to suspend the Orders in Council, if the American Government will repeal the Non-importation Act. The sincerity of France will thereby be put to the test; and a breathing-time gained in the midst of this mortal hostility, during which an opportunity would be afforded for a return to a more civilized species of warfare. If the experiment fails, and France persists in her frantic devices, we must return to our retaliatory system; but if driven to do so, we shall at least have shown every disposition to concede to all just demands of the neutral powers; and such a return would, it is to be hoped, not lead to any interruption of the amicable intercourse between this country and its Transatlantic offspring, which it is the curse of both countries should ever have been broken."[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xxiii. 522, 536.

No division ensued upon this debate, Mr Brougham contenting himself with congratulating the country upon the prospect of speedily getting rid of these obnoxious orders, and the Ministry upon the manly course they had adopted regarding it. In truth, it

CHAP. LX. 1812.

was evident, after the declarations of both the English and French Governments, that no real object of contention remained between them; or at least that both might, with perfect consistency with their national honour and recorded declarations on the subject, recede from the virulent system of hostility which they had adopted. A fortnight after there appeared in the Gazette an order absolutely and unequivocally revoking the Orders in Council; but with a declaration that, if the Americans do not, after due notice, revoke their interdictory acts against British commerce, the revocation should become null, and the original orders revive. This just and manly concession, however, came too late: the democratic party in America had gained entire possession of the public mind: a contest with England, at all hazards, was resolved on: and, before the conciliatory act of the British Government had crossed the Atlantic, war was actually declared.[1]

Result of these proceedings in Parliament.

June 23.

[1] Ann. Reg. 1812, 93, 94.

It is evident, on a dispassionate review of this great debate, and the mighty interests which were wound up with it, that the repeal of the Orders in Council, at the period it took place, was a wise, and indeed necessary measure, and that the greater part of Mr Brougham's arguments were well founded. The observation of Mr Canning, in the course of the discussion, was perfectly just, that the Orders in Council were a political, not a commercial measure; and the moment that the evil induced by their continuance exceeded the benefit to be expected from it, the hour for their repeal had arrived. That this period had arrived in 1812, was decisively proved by the great falling off in the commerce of the preceding year. Hopes, indeed, might reasonably have been entertained that the neutral states, seeing how evi-

Reflections on this subject.

dently Great Britain stood upon the defensive in the maritime quarrel, would have stood aloof from engaging in it; especially when it was recollected how much more closely their interests were wound up with the maintenance of pacific relations with this country, than with any of the continental powers. America, in particular, which traded with Great Britain to the extent of L.13,000,000 a-year, and with France not to the extent of L.1,000,000 annually, had the most vital interest to preserve pacific relations with the nation with whom so great a portion of its commercial intercourse was conducted. The whole arguments, so forcibly urged by Mr Brougham, as to the vast importance of the American trade to the English manufacturers, applied still more strongly to the impolicy of the United States coming to a rupture with this country, as the proportion which the English trade bore to the sum-total of their commerce was much greater than the American bore to the aggregate of ours. But still, when the experiment had been made, and it had been proved by the result that the United States were willing to undergo the loss of such a traffic rather than submit to the English Orders in Council, it became to the last degree impolitic to continue them any longer: for America had infinitely greater resources whereon to subsist during such a suspension of intercourse than the British empire; and in the struggle which can starve longest, the manufacturing state, the workshop of the world, like a besieged town, is sure to suffer more than the nations which have drawn their lines of circumvallation around it.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

History, in the general case, has to deal only with the dead; and it is seldom either just or delicate to mingle with the historical gallery of departed great-

CHAP. LX. 1812.

Early life of Lord Brougham.

ness the portraits of living genius. There are some instances, however, in which this obvious rule must be infringed upon; where the impress communicated to the events of an age by one individual has been so powerful, that his character has become historical property even before his active agency has ceased on the theatre of human affairs. Such a character, in a military and political view, is the Duke of Wellington; and such, in a moral and social one, is Lord Brougham. This very remarkable man is descended from an old and respectable family in Westmoreland, from whom he inherited the ancient castellated mansion from which he afterwards took his title; and he received the rudiments of his education at the High School of Edinburgh, where his father had for some years resided. Thence, at an early age, he went to the far-famed university of that city, over which the names of Stewart and Playfair at that period threw an unusual splendour, and where a band of gifted spirits were then arising, many of whom have since shone forth with extraordinary lustre on the great stage of the world. Lord Jeffrey, the most celebrated critic of the age in which he lived; Sir Walter Scott, the greatest of human novelists; Lord Lansdowne, the not unworthy successor of Pitt in the direction of the British finances; Mr Horner, whose early and lamented death alone prevented him from rising to the highest place in the councils of his country; Lord Brougham, who, for good or for evil, has made the schoolmaster's rod superior to the marshal's baton; formed some of the members of a society, in which other men, not less distinguished for energy and talents, were then prominent, whose powers are, it is to be feared, destined to be buried in that common charnel-house of genius—the Bar and Bench of the

country.* He was called to the bar at Edinburgh in 1801, and soon attracted notice by the energy of his character, and the fearlessness and occasional sarcasm of his demeanour: but that capital was too limited a theatre for his growing powers. An able and original work, which he published in 1802, on the colonial policy of Great Britain, early attracted the notice of Mr Pitt; a series of powerful and original papers in the *Edinburgh Review*, gave token of the vast influence which he was destined to exercise on public thought; and his removal to Westminster Hall, a few years afterwards, placed him in a situation where legal celebrity was not inconsistent with senatorial advancement. CHAP. LX. 1812.

He first obtained entrance into Parliament, like all the great men of his day, for a close borough, then in the gift of Lord Carlisle; but his manner was unprepossessing, his voice harsh, and he was far at first from coming up to the exalted anticipations formed by his friends, and subsequently realized, of his future career. The unconquerable perseverance of his disposition overcame all obstacles, and ultimately obtained for him, if not the avowed at least the real lead on the Whig side in the House of Commons. His practice at the bar, though considerable, and brilliant from the political character of the cases in which he was chiefly engaged, was not first-rate; and both in legal knowledge and forensic judgment he was never deemed equal to his His character as a statesman.

* To those who have the felicity of enjoying the acquaintance, or still more the friendship of Lord Corehouse, Lord Moncreiff, Lord Mackenzie, or Lord Cockburn, it is needless to say that nothing but a wider theatre of action, closer proximity to the Legislature, or greater leisure for literary pursuits, were necessary to have raised them to the same general eminence which the philosophers, statesmen, and historians of their country, in the last and present age, have attained.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

redoubted antagonist on the northern circuit, Sir James Scarlett, now Lord Abinger. But in energy of character, invincible perseverance, versatility of talent, force of expression, and sarcastic power, he was far beyond any barrister or statesman of his day; and if his judgment had been equal to his ability, or his discretion to his information, and his vast capacity for exertion had always been directed to objects consistent with each other, and of permanent utility rather than passing interest, he would have left a name in history, as he unquestionably has exercised an influence on his own age, second to none in the modern annals of Great Britain.

His failings and errors.

But inconsistency and want of foresight have always been the bane of his public character. He has signally promoted some great causes, as that of legal reform; but it is hard to say, upon reviewing the opinions which he has advocated at different periods of his life, whether he has most injured or benefited others which he had still more at heart. He was the steady advocate of Negro freedom, general education, universal toleration, and social amelioration; yet there is hardly a measure in the end destructive to these great interests of which he has not, at some period of his career, been the ardent supporter. He has been through life the most resolute enemy of the slave trade, and deserves the lasting thanks of every friend to humanity for his noble efforts to root out that execrable traffic; but he not less strenuously advocated the abolition of slavery in the British West India Islands in 1834; and, by so doing, he has doubled the slave trade in extent, and quadrupled it in atrocity throughout the globe.

* The number of slaves landed in Cuba and Brazil alone, said Mr Buxton, the able and humane advocate of the Negro race, is 150,000,

He besought the House of Peers on his bended knees to pass the Reform Bill, though the opponents of that measure drew their strongest arguments from his own earlier writings on the subject; and his whole efforts for the last five years have been directed to demonstrate the unhappy effects of the kind of government which that great change necessarily brought upon the country. He was the warm and consistent supporter of Catholic emancipation; but his exertions have of late been equally vigorous and effective in demonstrating the bad consequences which its concession have hitherto at least had upon social amelioration in the one island, and the general system of government in the other. He has always been the sincere and powerful supporter of popular instruction; but by directing it chiefly to intellectual acquisitions, he turned that mighty lever to visionary objects, and placed it beyond the reach or without the interest of the great body of the people; while, by severing it from religious instruction, he deprived it of the chief blessings which it is fitted to confer upon mankind. He is possessed of extraordinary intensity of vision for present objects and immediate interests; but far from being equally clear-sighted as to ultimate consequences, or the permanent welfare of humanity.

CHAP. LX. 1812

His style of speaking presents the most extraordinary contrast to the abstract ideas which he entertains, and has powerfully expressed, as to the perfection of eloquence. No man feels more

being more than double the whole draught on Africa when the slave-trade controversy began. Twice as many human beings are now its victims as when Wilberforce and Clarkson began their noble task; and each individual of this increased number, in addition to the horrors formerly endured, is cribbed up in a smaller space, and stowed in a vessel where accommodation is sacrificed to spoil."—*African Slave Trade*, by T. F. Buxton, London, 1839, p. 172.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

His character as an orator.

strongly the masculine simplicity of ancient oratory, or has better described the injurious effect sometimes even of a single epithet on the majesty of thought; while none more constantly weakens the force of his own intense and vivid conceptions by variety and redundance of expression. He objected to the addition which the imagination of Tasso made to the sublime image of Dante;* and yet he seldom fails to overwhelm the reader by exaggerations of the same idea under different forms, till the original impression is wellnigh obliterated. No one more happily or forcibly strikes the iron upon the head in the outset; but none, by a repetition of slant blows, more frequently mars its force, or alters its direction. His long practice of addressing juries, or assemblies of ordinary capacity, has proved injurious to his efforts to reach the highest style of eloquence. Every idea, if at all felicitous, is, in his hand, torn to rags. He forgets that those who read his speeches will not be equally obtuse with those who heard them, "que

* Al guisà di Leon quando si posa.

To which Tasso added the line,

Girando gli occhi, et non movendo il passo.

Critics may differ as to whether the beautiful image in the last line does or does not detract from the majestic simplicity of the first; but Lord Brougham unequivocally condemns it as destroying the grandeur of the Florentine bard. See Lord Brougham's Address to the Students at Glasgow. *Lord Rectors' Addresses*, Glasgow, 1830. A most interesting collection, as well from the celebrity of the statesmen and philosophers called to that eminent station, as from the progressive change in the character of thought, which their successive compositions evince, from the philosophic silence on religion, characteristic of the days of Hume, with which it commences, to the devotional glow descriptive of those of Chalmers, with which it concludes, and which only wants the admirable address of Sir James Graham, in 1838, to be one of the most instructive monuments which the literature of Europe during and after the French Revolution has produced, of the vast effect of that great event in bringing men back, by necessity and suffering, to the best and noblest sentiments of their nature.

les gens habiles s'entendent à demi-mot." On this account, his fame with posterity, that is, the reading and thinking few, will be by no means equal to that which he has enjoyed among his contemporaries; that is, the hearing and unthinking many. Irony and sarcasm constitute his strongest arm in oratorial contests; and there he is unrivalled even by Pitt or Canning. His speeches to juries were often models of vehement and powerful declamation; but his judgment as a counsel was far from being equal to his talent as a barrister, and in more than one instance he has supplied what was wanting on the side of the prosecution by his imprudence in calling witnesses for the defence.* His information is immense, and his powers of application unbounded; but his knowledge on subjects of philosophy rather extensive than accurate,—of law, varied than profound. He has always been distinguished by the warmest filial and domestic attachments; and a purer ray of glory than even that which is reflected from his senatorial achievements, is to be found in the steadiness with which, though often erring in judgment, he has ever

CHAP. LX. 1812.

* It is well known that the character of the chief witnesses for the prosecution, in the case of Queen Caroline, was so bad, that no reliance could be placed on their testimony; and on this fact Lord Brougham has never failed to descant in the most unmeasured terms whenever he could by possibility introduce the subject. He has not so frequently told, however, what is equally well known, that it was the evidence of the witnesses whom he himself put into the box, Lieutenants Flyn and Hownam, whose character was above suspicion, that in the end left no doubt of the Queen's guilt in the mind of any person capable of weighing evidence.—See *Parliamentary Debates*, 1820, III., 459-543, *New Series*. Yet this unhappy princess was possessed of some amiable, and many charming qualities; and in better hands might, in Mr Canning's words, have been "the life, and grace, and ornament of society." "She is," says a personal and disinterested acquaintance, Sir Walter Scott, "a charming princess, and lives in an enchanted palace; and I cannot help thinking her prince must labour under some malignant spell to deny himself her society."—See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, p. 99.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

supported the interests of freedom and humanity; and the indefatigable ardour which has enabled him, amidst a multiplicity of professional and official duties which would have overwhelmed any other man, to devote his great powers to the illustration of the wisdom of God from the works of nature.

The prosecution of the war in the Peninsula, and the chances of continuing it with success, was the last of the momentous subjects which occupied the British Parliament during the sessions of 1810 and 1811; and none present more interesting matter for retrospect.

Argument of the Opposition against the Spanish war.

On the part of the Opposition, it was strenuously argued by Mr Ponsonby, Earl Grey, and Lord Grenville:—"It is a painful task to refer to predictions formerly made and despised, now unfortunately realized. How disagreeable soever it may nevertheless be, from a reference to past disasters, to anticipate future calamities, it has now become a bounden duty to do so; and that the more, that it is not a mere barren censure of past errors to which such a retrospect leads, but a solemn injunction to rescue the country in future from similar calamities. Is Parliament to sit year after year passive spectators of wasteful expenditure, and the useless effusion of the best blood of the country, in hopeless, calamitous, and disgraceful efforts? What return is due to the gallant army which has made such noble sacrifices? Is it not a sacred duty imposed upon Government to see that not one drop more of blood is wasted in a cause where no thinking man can say, that by any possibility such dreadful sacrifices are made with any prospect of advantage to the country? Is it agreeable or consistent with the character of men of common intelligence, to submit

to be fed from day to day with the tale of unprofitable successes—of imaginary advantages to be gained by our army for ourselves or our allies? Is there any one who in his conscience believes, that even the sacrifice of the whole British army would secure the defence of Portugal? If such a man there be, it may with confidence be affirmed, not only that he is unfit to be intrusted with the government of the country, but even incapable of transacting public business in any deliberative assembly.

"In a financial point of view, the cause of the Peninsula is utterly hopeless. Can any man who looks at our immense exertions for the last seventeen years, assert that the annual expenditure of from three to four millions in its defence, has not been absolutely lost to Spain, fruitless to Portugal, and of no advantage whatever to this country? In fact, so utterly hopeless is the cause, that nothing short of a divine miracle can render it effectual to its proposed object. But there are higher considerations than those of mere finance, which call upon us instantly to abandon this sanguinary and unprofitable struggle. The utter impossibility of defending Portugal with the British army, aided by the Portuguese levies, is so apparent, that it is a mockery of common understanding to argue on the subject. In former instances, when Portugal was attacked, the forces of the enemy were divided; but now they are wholly unoccupied in the north, and may be directed with fatal and unerring effect against that country. Is there any man bold enough to assert that the British army in Portugal, aided by the native force, maintained by our subsidies, will be sufficient to resist such an attack? What reliance can be placed on this subsidiary force, unpractised in the operations of

CHAP. LX. 1810.

war, and wholly ignorant of military discipline, except what they may pick up from their British officers? That Portugal can be defended by such a force, is a thing absolutely impossible: if our troops do not take refuge in their ships, before six months is over not a British soldier will remain in the Peninsula except as a prisoner of war.

"Has any thing been done to rescue the Portuguese people from the miserable state of thraldom in which they have been kept by their Government, nobles, and priests, and to develop that ardent popular spirit from which alone history teaches us a vigorous national resistance is to be expected? Here has been a glorious opportunity for raising the Portuguese nation from that wretchedness and degraded condition to which centuries of mental ignorance and civil oppression have reduced them. Here was a task worthy of the greatest statesmen, suited to a wise and liberal policy—to an enlarged and generous spirit—to the free institutions of a free Government. Nothing has been done with this view: the Portuguese are in as degraded a state as when the French eagles first approached the towers of Lisbon. Was it possible to expect a national spirit to arise when nothing was done to elicit it? And without such a spirit among the people, was it not, if possible, more hopeless than from other views to expect that any successful resistance could be made?

"The Portuguese levies, upon whom so much reliance is placed, might in time, perhaps, hereafter become good soldiers, and be capable of acting with regular troops. But when the corruption, weakness, and imbecility of the Government are taken into view, every one must be convinced of the total impossibility of obtaining any native force capable of active

co-operation with the British army. What assistance have we ever obtained from the Spanish armies, notwithstanding the high-sounding promises with which they have deluded the English troops into their territories? To expect any thing better from the Portuguese, is to put all experience at defiance. They may be useful as light troops, but cannot act with regular soldiers. Portugal, instead of being defensible from its mountains, is perhaps the most indefensible country in Europe. The experience not merely of the last seventeen years, but of the last few months, have amply demonstrated the total inefficacy of mountain ranges as a barrier against the vast forces and bold tactics of modern war. What defence has the Sierra Morena proved against the invasion of Soult? It is not by any such defences that Portugal is to be saved from the fate which has overtaken all the military monarchies of Europe. Disguise it as you will, the real question at issue is, whether the army at this moment in Portugal is to be sacrificed, as those under Sir John Moore and Lord Chatham have been; and unless the House intervenes, from a just sense of its own duty not less than of the national honour, disasters yet greater than either of these, and probably irreparable, await the British empire.

"Our victories are perpetually held up as monuments of our eternal glory, and Maida, Corunna, Vimeira, and Talavera, are everlastingly referred to as the theme of undying congratulation. But what have any of these boasted triumphs done for the people of the country where they were won, or for the general issue of the war? Maida handed over the Neapolitans to the tender mercies of an irritated and cruel enemy; Corunna sacrificed Moore only to deliver

CHAP. LX. 1810.

over Gallicia to the Gallic armies; Vimeira was immediately followed by the disgraceful convention of Cintra; and Talavera was at best but an exhibition of rash confidence and victorious temerity. Honours have been conferred upon Sir Arthur Wellesley, for whom and for his country it would have been much more honourable if he had never changed his name. His conduct in Spain seemed the result of infatuation. After defeating Soult, he recrossed the Douro to form a junction with Cuesta, and when that was effected he remained unaccountably inactive, till Soult was so far recovered as to be able to paralyse all his efforts, by descending into his rear after the battle of Talavera; and when forced to retreat, he retired to an unhealthy province at an unhealthy season, where he remained some months till his army had lost a third of its amount from malaria fever. If these are the consequences of your triumphs, what may be anticipated from your defeats?"[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xv. 511, 535, 87, 90.

Answer by Lords Wellesley and Liverpool.

To these arguments it was replied by Lord Wellesley, Lord Liverpool, and Mr Perceval:—"The arrangements now proposed, proceed on the same principles with the whole efforts hitherto made, and sanctioned by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament. What has hitherto occurred to induce us to swerve from this course, or depart from those principles which have invariably influenced our alliance with the peninsular kingdoms to the present hour? The royal message proposes to take thirty thousand Portuguese into British pay. Has not such a course been strenuously recommended by Mr Fox and Mr Windham, when Portugal was endangered, when they were in power in 1806? Why are we to be now called upon to depart from this policy, adopted by our greatest statesmen of all parties; to

abandon Portugal to her fate at the very time when she is making the greatest efforts to avert subjugation? What advantage is to be gained from thus casting over our counsels the hue of despair? Are we to tell our allies that the hour of their fate has arrived; that all attempts to assist them are in vain, and that they must bow the neck and submit to the yoke of a merciless invader? That, indeed, would be to strew the conqueror's path with flowers; to prepare the way for his triumphal march to the throne of the two kingdoms. Is it for this that so much treasure has been expended, so much blood has been shed? The spirit of the Spanish people is still excellent, their resources are far from exhausted; those of Portugal are untouched; our gallant army has never yet sustained a defeat; and *is this* the time to retire with disgrace from the contest? Will he who never risks a defeat ever gain a victory? Let us not, therefore, come to any resolution which can countenance Portugal in relaxing her exertions, or justify Spain in considering her condition hopeless. And yet what other result could be anticipated if we were now to withdraw from the Peninsula before Portugal is so much as invaded, or the shock of war has even come upon us?

1810.

"The circumstances under which the war has commenced in the Peninsula, form a glorious contrast to those that pervade all the other nations of the continent. Spain was the first country that exhibited the example of a general rising of its population against the invasion and usurpation of the French ruler. In other countries he has been opposed by the armies alone, and, when they were overwhelmed, the states were conquered. But in Spain the resistance has proceeded from the whole

CHAP. LX. 1810.

people; and the hopes founded on their efforts are not to be dashed to the ground by the disasters of two or three campaigns. The country presents, beyond any other, physical advantages for such a stubborn system of warfare, from the vast desert or rocky tracts and numerous mountain ridges with which it abounds; while the history and character of the people afford room for well-grounded hopes, that they will not in such a contest belie the character which they acquired in the Moorish wars. No point can be imagined so favourable for the *place d'armes* of the British force as the Tagus, lying as it does on the flank of the enemy's communications, and in such a position as to afford a central point, equally adapted for secure defence or offensive operations.

"If the defence of Portugal is really of that desperate character which is represented, let a motion be brought forward at once to abandon that country to its fate. Will the gentlemen opposite support such a motion, and thereby sacrifice at once all the blood and treasure which have been expended in defence of the Peninsula? Will they bring invasion home at once to our own doors? Have we gained nothing by the contest in its bloody fields? Is it nothing to have maintained a doubtful struggle with the conqueror of continental Europe for so long a period, to have staid the tide of conquest heretofore, so fearfully rapid, and to be able to say that still, in the third year of the war, our standards wave in undiminished security over the towers of Lisbon? We have gained that which is at once more honourable and more precious than empty laurels, the affection and confidence of the people both in Portugal and Spain; affection so great, that there is not a

want of the British soldier's in the former country that is not instantly and gratuitously supplied; confidence so unbounded, that the Government of the latter have offered to put their fleet at the disposal of the British Admiral. War has its chances and its reverses as well as its glories: we cannot gain the latter if we shun the former; but surely never did nation win a brighter garland than England has done during the Peninsular contest, and never was nation bound by stronger ties to support a people who with such heroic resolution have, during three years, borne the whole weight of Napoleon's military power." [1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xvi. 508, 535, and 94, 105.

"It is ungenerous to represent the whole people of the Peninsula as having achieved nothing worthy of memory. Have the defenders of Saragossa and Gerona no title to the admiration of posterity? Where else have three hundred thousand Frenchmen been constantly engaged in active warfare for three years, without having yet effected its subjugation? True, Spaniards have been often defeated; true, their chief provinces have been overrun; but after every defeat fresh armies have sprung up, and all history cannot produce an example of a more heroic resistance than this 'degraded' people have opposed to the invader. Nor has our co-operation been in time past unavailing, nor will it prove in time to come fruitless. Sir John Moore's advance arrested the conquest of the south of Spain, and postponed for more than a year the irruption into the Andalusian provinces. Lord Wellington's attack on Soult expelled the French from Portugal, and restored Gallicia and Asturias, with the fleet at the Ferrol, to the patriot arms; his advance towards Madrid has drawn all the disposable forces of the enemy into the

CHAP. LX. 1810.

plains of La Mancha, and at once protected Portugal and given a breathing time to Spain. The British army, headed by Wellington, and supported by forty thousand Portuguese, directed by British officers, is not yet expelled from the Peninsula; and it will require no ordinary force of the enemy to dislodge such a body from their strongholds near Lisbon." *

Upon this debate Parliament supported Ministers in their resolution to continue the war, in the Lords by a majority of 30, the numbers being 124 to 94; and in the Commons by a majority of 96, the numbers being 263 to 167.[1]

[1] Parl. Deb. xvi. 536, and 105.

Reflections on this debate, and the conduct of the Opposition on the subject.

When the Eastern sage was desired by a victorious Sultan to give him an inscription for a ring, which should, in a few words, convey the advice best calculated to moderate the triumph of prosperous, and diminish the depression of adverse fortune, he wrote the line—"*And this too shall pass away.*" Perhaps it is impossible to find words more universally descriptive of human affairs; or of that unceasing change from evil to good, and from good to evil, which, alike in private life and the concerns of nations, appears to be the destiny of all sublunary things. It is from inattention to this perpetual revolution, not of fortune, but of moral causes controlling it, that the greatest political calamities, and most of the greatest political errors, in every age, have been owing. The Opposition, in the earlier part of Wellington's career, were subject to their full share of this general weakness. They thought that things would continue permanently as they then were; that Napoleon's greatness was to be as durable

* In justice to the Opposition, it must be observed, that the greater part of the debates here summed up, took place immediately before the Torres Vedras campaign.

as it had been irresistible; and that the experienced inability of any European power to combat his land forces, had, for the lifetime of the whole existing generation at least, established his empire beyond the possibility of overthrow. Judging from the past experience of that conqueror, there can be no doubt that these views were founded in reason; and yet the world was on the eve of the campaign of Salamanca and the Moscow retreat. The error of the Opposition consisted in their insensibility to the change which was supervening in human affairs, and to the new principles of vigour on the one side, and weakness on the other, which were rising into action from the effects of the very triumphs and reverses which appeared to have indelibly fixed the destiny of human affairs. The perception of such a change, when going forward, is the highest effort of political wisdom; it is the power of discerning it, which, in every important crisis, distinguishes the great from the second-rate statesman; the heroic from the temporizing ruler of mankind. Alone of all his compeers, Wellington saw and acted on this conviction; the Government at home, gifted with less penetration, or fewer opportunities of observation, were far from sharing in his confidence as to the result, though they had the magnanimity to persevere in their course, even when they had little hopes of its success. The glorious triumph to which it led, and the enduring reward which their constancy obtained, adds another to the many instances which history affords, where heroism of conduct has supplied the want of intellectual acuteness, and where the ancient maxim has been found good, that "true wisdom cometh from the heart."

The prolonged, obstinate, and most formidable resistance which the Whig party made to the pro-

CHAP. LX. 1810.

secution of the Spanish war in its earlier stages, was an error of judgment, which only showed that they were not gifted with the highest political quality,—that of seeing futurity through the shadows of present events. But when the tide had obviously turned—when success had in a durable way crowned the British arms, and the waves of Gallic ambition had permanently receded from the rocks of Torres Vedras—their conduct was of a more reprehensible cast; it became the fit subject of moral censure. With slow and unwilling steps they receded from their favourite position, as to the impossibility of defending Portugal: they still heaped abuse upon Ministers for their conduct in the contest, although it was chiefly blameable, in time past, from having been too much framed on their advice; it was a cold and reluctant assent which they yielded even to the merits of Wellington himself. This insensibility to national glory, when it interfered with party ambition—this jealousy of individual greatness, when it obscured party renown—proved fatal to their hopes of accession to power during the lifetime of the generation which had grown up to manhood in the revolutionary war. Doubtless it is the highest effort of patriotic virtue to exult at successes which are to confirm an adverse party in power,—doubtless no small share of magnanimity is required to concede merit to an opponent who is withering the hopes of individual elevation: but nations, from men acting on the great theatre of the world, have a right to expect such disinterestedness; it is the wisest course in the end even for themselves; and experience has proved that in every age really generous hearts are capable of such conduct. When Wellington lay at Elvas, in May 1811, he received a letter from Mr Whitbread, retracting, in the handsomest manner, his former

Their long insensibility to the glory of England.

strictures, and ascribing them, probably with perfect justice, to the imperfect information on which his judgment had been founded. The English general expressed himself highly gratified, as well he might, with this generous conduct;* but it does not appear that so noble an example was followed by any other of the Whig leaders; and on this occasion unhappily, as on many others, the exception proves the rule.

Budget, and naval and military forces of 1811.

Having determined to prosecute the war in the Peninsula with undiminished vigour, Parliament voted to Ministers ample supplies in the year 1811 for its prosecution. No less than L.19,540,000 was voted for the navy, and L.23,869,000 for the army, besides L.4,555,000 for the ordnance, and L.2,700,000 for the support of the Portuguese forces. The permanent taxes amounted to L.38,232,000, and the war yielded above L.25,000,000, and the loan was L.16,636,000, including L.4,500,000 for the service of Ireland. The total Ways and Means raised on account of Great Britain were L80,600,000, and L.10,309,000 on account of Ireland—in all L.90,909,000. This income, immense as it was, fell short of the expenditure of the United Kingdom,

* "I was most highly gratified by your letter of the 29th April, received last night, and I beg to return you my thanks for the mode in which you have taken the trouble to inform me of the favourable change of your opinion respecting affairs in this country. I acknowledge that I was much concerned to find that persons for whom I entertained the highest respect, and whose opinions were likely to have great weight in England and throughout Europe, had deliverod opinions, erroneous as I thought, respecting things in this country; and I prized their judgments so highly, that, being certain of the error of the opinion which they delivered, I was induced to ascribe their conduct to the excess of the spirit of party. I am highly gratified by the approbation of yourself and others; and it gives me still more pleasure to be convinced that such men could not be unjust towards an officer in the service of the country abroad."—WELLINGTON *to* SAMUEL WHITBREAD, ESQ., 23*d May* 1811—GURWOOD, vii. 585.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

which that year reached L.92,194,000. The army numbered 220,000 soldiers in the regular forces, 81,000 militia, besides 340,000 local militia; and the navy exhibited 107 ships of the line in commission, besides 119 frigates. The total vessels of war belonging to the United Kingdom were 1019, of which no less than 240 were of the line.[1]*

[1] Finance accounts. Parl. Deb. xxii. 1, 34, App. and Ann. Reg. 1812, 398, 408. App. to Chron. James V. Table iii. App. No. 19.

The supplies voted for the succeeding year, 1812, were still greater, and kept pace with the increasing magnitude of the contest when the campaign of Salamanca had commenced, and the deliverance of the Peninsula in good earnest was attempted. The net produce of the permanent taxes in that year was no less than L.40,000,000, of the war L.26,000,000, in all L.66,000,000; and L.29,268,000 was raised by loan, including L.4,500,000 for the service of Ireland, and L.2,500,000 for that of the East India Company, guaranteed by Government. The public expenditure was on a proportionate scale: the sums expended for the navy were L.20,500,000, for the army L.25,000,000, besides L.4,252,000 for the ordnance: the loans to Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Sicily, and Russia, amounted to L.5,315,000, while the interest of the national debt amounted to L.23,124,000; and still no less than L.13,482,000 was applied to the sinking fund. The navy, during this year, consisted of 978 ships of all sizes, of which 236 were of the line, and 102 line-of-battle ships, and 131 frigates in commission. The army numbered 227,000 regular soldiers under its banners, besides 76,000 regular, and 335,000 local militia. It seemed as if, as the contest continued and the scale on which it was conducted was enlarged, the resources of the empire so far from declining, widely expanded.†

Budget, and naval and military forces for 1812.

* See note E, in Appendix.

† See note F, in Appendix.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

The second decennial census of the population took place in the close of 1811, and was reported to Parliament in January 1812. It exhibited an increase of 1,500,000 since the former number in 1801, being at the rate of about 13½ per cent annually over the whole empire. So great an augmentation, considering the protracted and bloody hostilities in which the nation had so long been engaged in every quarter of the globe, and the heavy drain on the male population both for foreign and colonial service, justly excited the surprise and called forth the congratulation of Parliament and the nation; and the important fact was then for the first time elicited, that war, though generally considered as the scourge of the species, when carried on according to the maxims of civilized life, often rather communicates an impulse than a check to the increase of mankind; and that the quickened circulation and augmented demand for labour which it occasions, more than compensate the destruction of human life by which it is accompanied.[1]*

Second decennial census of the people.

[1] Parl. Deb. xxi. 478.

Two very important events which occurred at this period, deserve to be mentioned before the domestic transactions of Great Britain in the years 1811 and 1812 are disposed of, and the reader is embarked in the mighty concluding events of the war. The first of these was the rupture of the negotiations which

Negotiation for an exchange of prisoners with France.

	1801.	1811.
* Population of England,	8,331,434	9,499,400
Wales,	541,546	607,380
Scotland,	1,599,068	1,804,864
Army and Navy,	470,598	640,500
Totals,	10,942,646	12,552,144

—*Parl. Deb.* xxi. 286.

CHAP. LX. 1812.

had been for some time pending for the exchange of prisoners of war between England and France: the second, the capture of the *last* colonial settlement of the French Emperor, and the establishment of the British flag in undisputed sovereignty both in the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

Immense accumulation of French prisoners in Great Britain.

Great embarrassment had, for a very long period, been experienced by the English Government from the immense accumulation of French prisoners in the British islands, and the difficulty of finding any secure places for the custody of so large a number of able-bodied men. Fortresses, with the exception of Portsmouth and Plymouth, there were none in England; and the only other regular fortification in the northern part of the island, Fort George, near Inverness in Scotland, had not accommodation for above fifteen hundred men. Nevertheless, there were, in 1810, not less then fifty thousand French prisoners in Great Britain; and after erecting, at an enormous expense, several vast structures for their habitation, particularly one at Dartmoor in the south of England, and two in Scotland, each capable of containing six or seven thousand men, the Government were under the necessity of confining great numbers in the hulks and guard-ships. The detention of soldiers in such a situation, was made the subject of loud and frequent complaint by the French Emperor, who said in the *Moniteur*, "that by a refinement in cruelty, the English Government sent the French soldiers on board the hulks, and the sailors into *prisons in the interior of Scotland*."* With his

* The great depot of French prisoners in Scotland, which Napoleon held out as so deplorable a place of detention, was a noble edifice, erected at a cost of nearly L.100,000, in a beautiful and salubrious

usual unfeeling disposition, however, to those whose services could no longer be made available, he not only resisted every proposal for an exchange of prisoners on any thing approaching to reasonable principles, but never remitted one farthing for their maintenance, leaving the whole helpless multitude to starve, or be a burden on the British Government, which, on the contrary, regularly remitted the whole cost of the support of the English captives in France to the Imperial authorities. Notwithstanding Napoleon's neglect, however, the prisoners were surprisingly healthy, there being only 321 sick out of 45,939 in confinement, while out of 2710 who enjoyed their liberty on their parole, no less than 165 were on the sick list.[1] 1 Parl. Deb. xx. 634. Hard. xi. 105.

Proposals for their exchange by Great Britain.

At length, in April 1810, the British Ministry sent Mr Mackenzie on a special errand to endeavour to effect an exchange with the French Government. He was well received by the Imperial Cabinet, and the negotiation opened under apparently favourable auspices; but it soon appeared that the demands of Napoleon were so exorbitant as to render all the efforts of the negotiators abortive. He insisted that the exchange should be general; that is, that all the prisoners, French, English, Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians, should be exchanged, man

situation near Perth, on the Tay, which, after being for twenty-five years unoccupied, was in 1839 converted by the Government, on account of its numerous advantages, into a great central jail for criminals. It contained 7000 prisoners; and so healthy was the situation, and substantial the fare and lodging they received, that of this great number only from five to six died annually; a smaller mortality than any equal body of men in any rank in Europe going about their usual avocations. That in England was equally healthy. At Dartmoor depot in 1812, out of 20,000 prisoners there were only 300 sick, or 1 in 66; a proportion much above the average health of persons at large.—*Personal Knowledge.* See *Parl. Deb.* xx. 694.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

for man, and rank for rank, on the same footing as the principal power under whose banners they were respectively ranged. The effect of this would have been, that Napoleon would have obtained restitution of fifty thousand French soldiers and sailors in exchange for *ten thousand* English prisoners, whom he only had in his custody; the balance of forty thousand being made up of a rabble of Spanish and Portuguese levies, who were of little value, and who had no title to be placed in the same rank with the regular soldiers of either of the principal nations. The British Government insisted that any given number of British should first be exchanged for an equal number of French; and that then the transfer, man for man, and rank for rank, between the remaining French or their allies against the Spanish and Portuguese should commence.* Neither party would recede from the position which they had respectively taken, and the result was, that the negotiations broke off, and Mr Mackenzie returned to this country in the beginning of November.[1]

[1] Bign. ix. 145. Parl. Deb. xx. 623, 631.

Failure of the negotiation was owing to Napoleon.

No other testimony than that of Napoleon himself is requisite to demonstrate the unreasonable nature of the pretension on his part, which led to this melancholy result. "Supposing," said he, in speaking of the comparative merit of the troops composing the French and allied armies previous to the battle of Waterloo, "that one English soldier was to be placed against one French, you would require two Prussian, or Dutch, or soldiers of the Confederation to counterbalance one Frenchman."[2] Now, if two Prussian or German regular soldiers were required to counterbalance one Englishman or Frenchman, unquestionably four Spanish or Portuguese undis-

[2] 9th Book of Nap. Mem. 61.

* See note G, Appendix.

ciplined recruits would have been barely sufficient for a similar counterpoise. Nothing, therefore, could have been more unreasonable than the demand on the part of the French Government, which ultimately proved fatal to the negotiation; yet so much was Napoleon blinded by egotistical feelings on this subject, that he made the conduct of the English Cabinet in the transaction a bitter subject of complaint to the latest hour of his life; and actually had the address to persuade his troops that their long detention in English prisons was the fault of the British Government, when it was entirely his own; and he had left them to starve there, which would have been their fate but for the humane interposition of the very Government which in this transaction he was loading with obloquy.[1]*

[1] Bign. ix. 145, 146. Parl. Deb. xx. 623, 631. Ann. Reg. 1811, 76. Las Cases, vii. 39, 40.

The other memorable event of the period, apart from the never-ending maze of European politics, was the successful expedition undertaken against JAVA in the close of 1811, and the capture of the *last colonial possession* of the French empire. This

Description and vast importance of Java.

* Napoleon's account of these transactions was as follows:—"The English had infinitely more French than I had English prisoners. I knew well that the moment they had got back their own, they would have discovered some pretext for carrying the exchange no farther, and my poor French would have remained for ever in the hulks. I admitted, therefore, that I had much fewer English than they had French prisoners; but then I had a great number of Spanish and Portuguese, and by taking them into account I had a mass of prisoners, in all, considerably greater than theirs. I offered therefore to exchange the whole against the whole. This proposition at first disconcerted them, but *at length they agreed to it.* But I had my eye on every thing. I saw clearly that if they began by exchanging an Englishman against a Frenchman, as soon as they got back their own they would have brought forward something to stop the exchange. I insisted therefore that three thousand Frenchman should at once be exchanged against one thousand English and two thousand Portuguese and Spaniards. They refused this, and so the negotiation broke off."—LAS CASES, vii. 39, 40.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

noble island, in itself a kingdom, is no less than 640 miles long, from 80 to 140 broad, and contains above two millions of inhabitants. Its surface, agreeably diversified by hill and dale, and rising in the interior into lofty mountains, presents situations adapted for almost every variety of vegetable production, whether in the temperate or torrid zones; while its admirable situation in the centre of the Indian Archipelago, midway between India and China, pointed it out as the emporium destined by nature for almost the whole of the lucrative Eastern commerce. So rich is its soil, so varied its capabilities, that it now produces sixty thousand tons of sugar, and five million pounds of pepper for exportation annually, besides furnishing rice and other grains for the support of its numerous inhabitants, and yielding a lucrative commerce of cinnamon, nutmeg, and other spices, to its European masters. It was early acquired, and had been for centuries in the hands of the Dutch, who, carrying to the East the habits and partialities of their own swampy territory, built their capital, Batavia, in a low unhealthy situation, and intersected it with canals, which rendered it doubly dangerous. Such, however, are the advantages of its situation, and of its noble harbour, esteemed the finest in the Indian Archipelago, that, notwithstanding its pestilential atmosphere, it contains nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants. But the cool breezes on the heights in its vicinity, offered many salubrious situations which the eager European thirst for gold has hitherto unaccountably neglected; while the lofty hills and pastoral valleys in the interior present numerous spots for human abode, where the burning rays of the sun are tempered by the fresh-blown mountain air, and

the glowing skies of the east shed their radiance over the rich foliage and green slopes of European scenery.[1]

1811.

This splendid island was the last possession beyond the seas which remained to the French empire, of which it had become a part upon the incorporation of Holland in 1810. Its reduction had long been an object of ambition to the British Government; and in 1802 the preparations for the expedition were so far advanced that the command was offered to Sir Arthur Wellesley, then Governor of Mysore, by whom it was refused, as interfering with the important duties of that responsible situation. The Mahratta war which soon after broke out, with its immediate consequence, the contest with Holkar, involved the Indian Government in such a maze of hostility, and so seriously embarrassed their finances, that it was not till 1811 that the project could be seriously revived. It was then, however, set about in good earnest; and, to give additional *eclat* to the expedition, Lord Minto, the Governor-general of India, resolved to accompany it in person.

[1] Malte Brun, iii. 445, 453. Valentyn. Java, 64, Indes Orient, v. 65.

Expedition against the island, and its capture.

In the close of 1810, the Isle of France surrendered to a combined naval and military expedition from Bombay, and the enemy was completely rooted out of his possessions in the Indian ocean. Those in the Eastern archipelago were the next object of attack. The islands of Amboyna and Banda having been reduced by the British arms, a powerful expedition against Java was fitted out at Madras in March, consisting of four British and five native regiments of infantry, with a regiment of horse and a considerable train of artillery; in all, ten thousand five hundred men, under the command of the gallant Sir Samuel Auchmuty. The expedition effected a landing at the

Dec. 6, 1810.

Feb. 1811.

April 1811.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

village of Chillingching, about twelve miles to the east of Batavia, in the beginning of August. The principal force of the enemy, which consisted of about ten thousand men, was collected in the intrenched camp of FORT CORNELIUS, a position strongly fortified by art and nature, and defended by numerous redoubts, surrounded by strong palisades, and mounting two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon.[1] The chief force of the French and Dutch was, in this formidable position, under their commander General Jansens; but a considerable detachment, about three thousand strong, occupied a more advanced post, also strengthened by field-works, two miles in front of the main body. Neither of these positions, however, commanded the road to the capital, which was accordingly occupied without opposition a few days after the landing; and from thence the troops advanced against the enemy's advanced work, and drove them from it with great spirit, under shelter of the cannon of Fort Cornelius; the grenadier company of the 78th, as in every Eastern field of fame, heading the attack. When the victorious troops, however, came in sight of that stronghold, they were checked by the fire from its outworks, and the boldest paused at the sight of the difficulties which they had to encounter. The enemy, strongly intrenched, occupied a position between the great river Jacatra and the Sloken, an artificial watercourse, neither of which was fordable. The front of this position, thus secured on either flank from attack, was covered by a deep ditch strongly palisadoed, within which were seven large redoubts, all planted with a formidable array of heavy artillery, garrisoned by a body of regular troops, much superior to the attacking force. Batteries were speedily raised opposite to these fortifi-

Aug. 4.

[1] Sir S. Auchmuty's Desp. Aug. 31, 1811. Ann. Reg. 1812, 225. App. to Chron.; and James's Naval History, vi. 26, 27.

Storming of the outworks of Cornelius.

Aug. 8.

cations, which, though armed with guns inferior to those of the enemy both in number and calibre, shortly did great execution from the superior rapidity and precision of their fire. The season, however, was too far advanced, and the heat too violent to admit of regular approaches; and, notwithstanding the strength of the intrenched camp, the English general resolved on an assault, which was fixed for daybreak on the 26th.[1] Sir S. Auchmuty's Desp. Ann. Reg. 1812, 226. App. to Chron. James, vii. 32, 33.

Storming of the lines of Fort Cornelius itself.

At midnight on the 25th, the assaulting columns moved from the trenches under the command of a most gallant and experienced officer, Colonel Gillespie. The right, under his own immediate direction and that of Colonel Gibbs, was directed against the enemy's redoubts beyond the Sloken, and had orders, if they succeeded in carrying them, to endeavour to force their way across the bridge which united that outwork to the main intrenchments; the left, under Colonel M'Leod, was to follow a path on the bank of the Jacatra, and commence an attack on that side when the firing was heard on the other flank; while the centre, under General Wetherall, was to endeavour, in the general confusion, to force its way across the ditch in front. Notwithstanding the early hour and secrecy of the attack, the enemy were on the alert, and under arms at all points; but the devoted gallantry of the British troops, aided by the unflinching steadiness of the sepoys, overcame every obstacle. All the attacks proved successful. Colonel Gillespie, after a long detour through an intricate country, came on the redoubt on the right, stormed it in an instant, notwithstanding a tremendous fire of grape and musketry; and, passing the bridge with the fugitives, also carried the redoubt next in order, though defended in the most obstinate manner by General

CHAP. LX. 1811.

Jansens in person. The British column then divided into two, one under Gillespie himself, the other under Colonel Gibbs, supported by Colonel Wood, at the head of the heroic 78th, which, though long opposed, now burst in with loud shouts in the front of the lines, and successively carried the works on either hand; while Colonel M'Leod, on the extreme left, also forced his way into the redoubt which rested on the Jacatra, and gloriously fell in the moment of victory. With equal judgment and valour, Gillespie lost not a moment in leading on the victorious troops to the attack of the enemy's park of artillery in the rear, which, with all the troops that defended it, fell into the hands of the conqueror. The victory was complete, though the severe loss sustained by the British, amounting to 872 killed and wounded, showed how obstinately it had been contested. The carnage of the enemy within the works was very great; above a thousand were buried on the field, besides multitudes cut down in the pursuit, and five thousand prisoners taken. No less than four hundred and thirty pieces of cannon were found in the intrenched camp, of which two hundred and eighty were mounted on the batteries and redoubts: the total pieces taken then, and in the citadel of Batavia and the outworks previously stormed, amounted to the enormous number of 264 brass, and 504 iron guns and mortars, besides ammunition and military stores to an incalculable amount.[1]

[1] Sir S. Auchmuty's Desp. Ann. Reg. 1812. App. to Chron. 226, 236. James, vi. 24.

Surrender of all Java. Sept. 26.

This splendid exploit was soon after followed by the capitulation of the remaining troops who had escaped with General Jansens from the rout at Fort Cornelius, and who, notwithstanding all his efforts, found it impracticable to prolong his defence. The whole of this noble island thus fell under the do-

minion of the British, (which, it must always be regretted, was relinquished by a misplaced generosity at a future time;) and Lord Minto said with great, but not unfounded pride, in his despatches to the British Government on the occasion, that "now the French flag was nowhere to be seen flying from Cape Comorin to Cape Horn."[1]

[1] Ann Reg. 1812, 169.

Such was the termination of the maritime war between England and Napoleon; thus was extinguished THE LAST REMNANT of the colonial empire of France. There is something solemn and apparently providential in the simultaneous march of these great powers to universal dominion on their respective elements, and in the establishment of the colonial empire of Great Britain on a scale of grandeur which embraced the whole earth in its arms. No such result could have been anticipated at the commencement of the contest; still less could it have been hoped for amidst the multiplied disasters with which its progress was attended. The maritime forces of England and France were very nearly matched at the opening of the war; united to those of Spain, the latter were superior. Gibraltar was only revictualled during the American war by the nautical skill of Lord Howe; and Plymouth beheld, for the first time in English history, its harbour blockaded by the triumphant squadrons of France and Spain. The colonial empire of France in 1792, though not equal, was a fair rival to that of England. In the West Indies, she possessed St Domingo, an island then yielding colonial produce equal to that of all the British West India islands put together at this time;* in the East, her flag or that of her allies

Reflections on the total destruction of the French colonial empire.

* It yielded L.18,000,000 worth of colonial produce—the whole British islands in 1833 was only L.22,000,000; and in 1839, in conse-

CHAP. LX. 1811.

waved over the Cape of Good Hope, the Isle of Bourbon, the Isle of France, Java, and the Malaccas, midway stations apparently set down for the transit of the commerce of the East to the European shores; while on the continent of Hindostan, her influence almost equalled that of England herself, and on the banks of the Jumna a force was organized, under French officers, superior to any which British energy could bring to bear against it.* What was it, then, which subverted this vast and growing colonial empire; which gave to the arms of England, amidst continual European disasters, a succession of maritime triumphs, unparalleled in the days of Marlborough or Chatham; and led to the total destruction of the Asiatic and American possessions of France, at the very time when Napoleon's forces had acquired universal dominion on the continent of Europe? Evidently the French Revolution on the one hand, and the constancy of England on the other; those mighty agents which at once dried up the maritime resources of the one country, and quadrupled the naval power of the other; which poured forth a host of ardent democrats on the plains of Europe, and sent forth the British fleets conquering and to conquer on the waves of the sea; which nursed in England the heroic spirit of Conservative freedom, and

quence of the emancipation of the slaves, it did not produce L. 17,000,000. The total West India produce of the British West India islands

	Sugar hhds.	Rum puncheons.
in 1829 was	271,700	61,700
in 1839	179,800	43,400
Falling off,	91,900	18,300

—*Colonial Magazine*, No. III. Appendix. *Parliamentary Return*, 4th June 1833, and Porter's *Parliamentary Tables*, I. 64. Ante, v. 7.

* They had 38,000 infantry and cavalry, and 270 guns, all commanded by French officers, and trained in the European method. *Vide Ante*, VII. 148.

extricated in France the irresistible energy of democratic ambition. CHAP. LX.

Even if the contest had terminated at this point, the fortunes of the British empire, though overshadowed at the moment by the grandeur of Napoleon's continental victories, must now appear to the reflecting eye to have been on the ascendant. England, by wresting from her rival all her colonial settlements, had made herself master of the fountains of the human race. In vain France recounted the fields of European fame, and pointed to the world filled with her renown, the Continent subjugated by her arms; it was the seats of ancient civilisation, the abode of departed greatness, which were thus subdued. Great Britain had cast her anchor in the waters of the emerging globe; her flag waved on the infant seats of civilisation; her seed was spreading over the future abodes of mankind. The conquest of the world which had been, however superior in present lustre, could never equal in durable effect the settlement of the world which was to be. There was to be found the ark which bore the fortunes of humanity; there the progenitors of the Greece, and the Rome, and the Europe yet to come; there the tongue which was to spread the glories of English genius and the pride of English descent as far as the waters of the ocean extend. But the contest was not to terminate here. The rival powers thus nursed to greatness on their respective elements, thus alike irresistible on the land and the sea, were now come into fierce and final collision. England was to launch her legions against France, and contend with her ancient rival on her own element for the palm of European ascendency; the desperate struggle in Russia was to bring to a decisive issue the contest for the mastery of the an-

1811.

Superiority of colonial to European conquest.

CHAP. LX. 1811.

cient world. We are on the eve of greater changes than have yet been traced on the pages of this eventful history—fiercer passions are to be brought into collision than those which had yet stirred mankind in the strife; sacrifices greater recounted, glories brighter recorded, than had yet shed lustre on the human race.

Importance of the preceding domestic detail of British transactions.

Long, and to some uninteresting, as the preceding detail of the domestic transactions of Great Britain from 1810 to 1812 may appear, it will not to the reflecting reader be deemed misplaced even in the annals of European story. Amidst the multiplied scenes of carnage, the ceaseless streams of blood, which characterise the era of Napoleon, it is consolatory to linger on one spot of pacific disquisition. To the eye wearied with the constant mastery of nations by physical strength, it is refreshing to turn to one scene where mind still asserted its inherent superiority, and in moral causes was yet to be found the source of the power which was ultimately to rule mankind. Independent of the vast intrinsic importance of the questions which then agitated the British mind, and their obvious bearing upon the social interests which now are at stake in all the commercial communities of the globe, their influence on the contest which was then pending was immediate and decisive. The crisis of the war truly occurred in the British islands at this period. If any of the great questions then in dependence, had been decided in a different manner from what they actually were by the English Parliament, the issue of the war—the fate of the world, would have been changed. The accession of the Opposition to power when the restrictions upon the Prince Regent expired in 1812; the adoption by the House of Commons of the recom-

mendations of the Bullion Committee; the abandonment by Government of the Peninsular contest, in pursuance of the strenuous arguments of their Parliamentary antagonists, would, any one of them, have speedily terminated the contest in favour of the French Emperor, crushed the rising spirit of Russia, extinguished the germ of European freedom, and affected, by the destruction of English maritime power, the whole destiny of the human race. Not less than on the fields of Leipsic or Waterloo did the fortunes of mankind hang suspended in the balance during the debates on those momentous subjects; interests more vital, consequences more momentous than any that were contemplated by their authors, hung upon the lips of the orators, and quivered on the decisions of the statesmen. It is this which gives the debates of the British senate at this period their enduring interest; it is this which has rendered the chapel of St Stephen's the forum of the human race. The military glory of England may be outshone by the exploits of future states; her literary renown may be overshadowed by the greatness of subsequent genius; but the moral interest of her social contests, mirrored in the debates of Parliament, will never be surpassed; and to the end of time the speeches of her illustrious statesmen will be referred to as the faithful image of those antagonist powers which alternately obtain the mastery in human affairs, and on the due equipoise of which the present happiness, as well as future advancement, of the species is mainly dependent.

CHAPTER LXI.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CORTES—WAR IN SPAIN.

JANUARY 1810—FEBRUARY 1812.

ARGUMENT.

CHAP. LXI.

1810.

Singular mixture of good and evil in human affairs—Agency by which it is brought about—Ultimate effects of the Blockade of Cadiz—Vast consequences it has produced in the World—Regulations laid down for the Convocation of the Cortes—Enactments regarding its Passing of Laws—Character of the Population in Cadiz, and the Municipality within its walls—Persecution of the Members of the Central Junta—Circumstances which preceded and attended the Assembling of the Cortes—Its Election is based on Numbers, not Interests—Election of its Supplementary Members—Final Election of the Cortes itself—Its Opening, and early Proceedings—Proclaims the Sovereignty of the People—Fresh assumptions of Supreme Power by them—Decree on the Liberty of the Press—Appointment of a Committee to frame a Constitution—Their Heroic Conduct in holding out against France—And rigid adherence to the Romish Church—Principles of the Constitution of 1812—Powers of the King—Constitution of the Cortes—Its vast effect in stimulating Political Passion in the Peninsula—Manner in which the New Constitution was received in Spain—Wellington's clear Perception and curious Predictions on the effects of the Cortes and New Constitution—His still clearer Opinion on the subject, after visiting Cadiz in spring 1813—Abortive attempt to effect the Liberation of Ferdinand VII.—Military condition of the French in Spain, in Spring 1810—Napoleon's intentions as to Dismembering Spain at this Period—Negotiation between him and Joseph for its Partition—Efforts of the Spanish Envoys to prevent it—Joseph in disgust at length Resigns the Crown—Terms of Accommodation between him and Napoleon—Prosperous Condition of the French at this period in Spain—Force assembled in Cadiz by the Allies—Spanish and British Forces in the Peninsula—Description of Cadiz—Arrival of the British Troops, and first Measures of Defence—Noble Defence of Matagorda by the British—Increased means of Defence accumulated in Cadiz itself—Description of the French lines round the city—Position of the French and Spanish Armies in Andalusia and Grenada—Operations in Catalonia, and preparations for the Siege of Tortosa—Forces and dispositions of the Spaniards in that Province—Macdonald's first Operations in Catalonia—Brilliant success of O'Donnell in the North of the Province—Repulse of Macdonald at Cardona, and his Retreat to Gerona—Suchet's exertions preparatory to the Siege of Tortosa—Commencement of the Siege—Description of that Fortress—Its Siege—Fall of the Place—Important consequences with which it was attended—Preparations for the Siege

of Taragona—Renewed Vigour of the Catalonians in the War—Attempt to surprise Barcelona, and Capture of Figueras by them—Unsuccessful attempt of Campoverde to relieve the Place—Burning of Manresa, and Action at that Place—Suchet's Reasons for Persisting in the Siege of Taragona—Description of that Fortress—Commencement of the Siege—Preparations for Storming of Fort Olivo—It is carried by storm—Vigorous preparations of the Spaniards for a protracted Defence—Progress of the Siege, and preparations of the Spaniards to Raise it—The Approaches are brought up to the Lower Town—It is Carried by Assault—Fruitless Attempt to Raise the Siege, and Failure of Succours from England—Preparations for Storming the Upper Town—Its Success—Disgraceful Cruelty of the French to the Citizens—Immense Results of this Siege—Suchet's next Operations—Description of Mont Serrat—Storming of its Convent—Blockade and Surrender of Figueras—Invasion of Valencia by Suchet, and Preparations for its Defence by the Spaniards—Description of Saguntum—Siege and Unsuccessful Assault of that Fort—A Second Assault is also Defeated—Perilous Situation of Suchet after this repulse—Successes of the Guerillas in Aragon—Advance of Blake to Raise the Siege—Battle of Saguntum—Delay of Suchet there, till he received reinforcements—He at length approaches and invests Valencia—The Spaniards are defeated and thrown back into the Town—Siege and Fall of Valencia—Immense Results of this Conquest—Complete Subjugation of the Province—*Honours* and Rewards bestowed on Suchet and his troops—Reflections on these Campaigns of Suchet—Painful Feelings on the Conduct of England in this part of Spain—Causes of the Weakness of the British Government at this period—Insecure Tenure Ministers had of their Offices—Its Principal Cause—Surprising Result of these Circumstances on the Ultimate Fate of Napoleon.

Singular mixture of good and evil in human affairs.

So intimately blended together are the links in the great chain of human affairs, and so mysterious the bond which unites in this sublunary state the co-existent principles of good and evil, that it is impossible to find any period where these antagonist powers have not been at work, and where unseen causes have not been preparing a vital change in the fate of nations or the fortunes of mankind. In the darkest moments of the French Revolution, the seeds of revived religion and renewed loyalty were widely scattered among mankind; in the most depressing period of the conquests of Napoleon, the principles of resistance were acquiring increased energy, and suffering was preparing in silence the renovation of the world. The period we are now considering was no exception to the general law. At the moment when the

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

constancy of England and the heroism of Russia were preparing the emancipation of the Continent from French oppression, and the delusions of democracy were disappearing in northern Europe before the experience of its effects, and about to yield to the aroused indignation of mankind, a new principle of evil was springing up in the last asylum of European independence, destined to revive in another quarter the worn-out flames, and perpetuate a frightful civil war for a quarter of a century in the Spanish peninsula; and while Great Britain was securely laying the foundations of a colonial empire, which was to embrace the earth in its grasp and civilize mankind by its wisdom, the vast Indian possessions of the Spanish monarchy were breaking off from the parent state, and the frantic passions of ill-regulated freedom were preparing desolation and ruin for the boundless realms of South American Independence.

Agency by which this is brought about.

That there is no rose without its thorn, and no thorn without its rose, is a maxim in private life which the concurring voice of all ages has proclaimed, and every man's experience who has seen much of human affairs must probably have confirmed. The law of nature seems to be of universal application and unceasing activity; for we can distinctly trace its agency in every transaction, whether individual or political, in the page of history or in common life around us, and perpetually witness its effects alike in the trials of individuals and the discipline of nations. In the very events which at one period are most the objects of our desire, whether as communities or private men, we can subsequently trace the unobserved causes of our distresses; in the evils which we at the time regarded as altogether overwhelming, we afterwards discern with thankfulness

the secret springs of our blessings or improvement. Inexperience or infidelity alone will discover in this mysterious system the blind operations of chance, or the antagonist agency of equal and opposing supreme powers. Reason equally with revelation tells us, that such is necessarily the condition of a world composed of free agents in a state of moral probation; that if the good principles alone were brought into action, it would be heaven—if the bad, hell; and that the mixed condition of mankind, and the perpetual agency of the causes of evil amidst good and of good amidst evil, necessarily arise from that inherent tendency to wickedness as well as aids to virtue, which we have inherited from our first parents, or derived from revelation. The pride of intellect, the visions of philanthropy, will to the end of time chafe against this simple truth, and contend, on the principle of unlimited perfectibility, for a relaxation of every restraint, except what itself imposes, on human action: but it is the only principle which will ever afford any solution of the otherwise inexplicable maze of human affairs. Experience, the great test of truth, is perpetually demonstrating its universal application. Suffering, wide-spread and inevitable, never fails to chastise any attempt to elude its obligations; and the more widely that one generation deviates from it in their actions, the more closely will the next adhere to it in their opinions.

Ultimate effects of the blockade of Cadiz.

Never was the truth of these principles more clearly evinced than in the contrast between the immediate and ultimate results which followed the arrival of the French before Cadiz in 1810. Europe with admiration beheld the able and energetic march of the Duke of Albuquerque, which, outstripping the celerity of the French legions, preserved the last bul-

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

wark of Spanish independence for the arms of freedom.* The subsequent assembly of the Cortes within its impregnable ramparts, promised to give that unity to the Spanish operations of which they had hitherto so grievously felt the want, at the same time that it presented a national authority with which other powers might treat, in their negotiations for the furtherance of the common cause; while the English people, variously affected by philanthropic ardour or mercantile interest, beheld with undisguised satisfaction the progressive emancipation of the South American colonies, and fondly anticipated, some a renovation of the Southern Hemisphere, others a boundless extension of the field for British speculation, in the egenerated states of the New World. Yet from these very events, so fortunate at the moment in their immediate effects, so apparently auspicious in their remote consequences, have arisen results to the last degree pernicious, both to the Spanish peninsula and the British empire.

Vast effects it has produced in the world.

The establishment of the Cortes within the walls of Cadiz brought it under the direct influence of the democratic mob of a great and corrupted city: the revolutionary passions revived with the immediate subjection of supreme power to their control, and the constitution of 1812 bequeathed to the Spanish peninsula the fatal gift of a system of government, alike impracticable for the country at large, and seducing to the urban constituencies, for whose interest it was intended. The severance of the Spanish colonies from the parent state, to which the mercantile jealousy of the Cadiz Government speedily gave rise, spread the revolutionary passions through a people unfit, either from their habits, intelligence, or descent, for the blessings of freedom: the bright dawn of their

* *Ante*, vii. 829.

independence was speedily overcast with clouds; and the now wasted and distracted South American states, the successive prey of a race of tyrants too numerous for history to record, remain an enduring monument of the utter impracticability of applying to a Roman Catholic population and Celtic race, those institutions which are overspreading the world with the Protestant faith and the Anglo-Saxon descent. Nor has England suffered less in this audacious attempt to war against the character of men and the laws of nature; consequences, to the last degree disastrous, have flowed both to her people and her constitution from the independence of the Spanish colonies, in promoting which she took so prominent a share: her wealth, guided by deluded, or the prey of unprincipled hands, has been absorbed to an unparalleled extent in South American speculations. The loss of fifty millions, lent to their faithless insolvent republics, or reckless and improvident companies, brought on the great commercial crisis of 1825; the entire abandonment of the South American mines, from the bankruptcy of those who worked them, altered by fully a third the value of money over the globe; and, joined to the suppression of small notes in Great Britain by the bill of 1826, added a third to the whole debt, public and private, of the British empire; and, from the general distress and suffering thence arising, has sprung that wide-spread discontent and chaos of unanimity in favour of some organic change, which in its ultimate effects altered the old English constitution. Out of the walls of Cadiz, in 1810 and 1811, has issued the cloud which now overspreads the world; the fierce passions which have ever since drenched the Peninsula with blood; the guilty ambition, which has halved in numbers, and almost reduced to barbarism,

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

the South American population; the restless energy which overthrew the constitutional freedom of the restoration in France; the turbulent spirit which overturned the tempered aristocracy and government of property in England.

Regulations laid down for the convocation of the Cortes. Jan. 1810.

Little dreaming of the momentous consequences dependent on their actions, the Spanish authorities in the Isle of Leon, animated with unconquerable resolution, and a spirit of resistance which seemed to augment with the straits to which they were reduced, proceeded to the formation of a Cortes for the regulation of the constitution. It has been already mentioned that the Central Junta, after their expulsion from Seville in January 1810, had passed a decree, vesting the interim government in a regency of six persons, which was proclaimed in Cadiz on the 31st, and laying down the principles by which the convocation of the Cortes was to be regulated.* These were of the utmost importance, and materially influenced the character of the subsequent proceedings. By the first, the ancient constitution of that body was altered, and, instead of assembling as of old in three chambers, they were to meet in two; the one called the Popular, the other the Dignified Assembly. A still more important enactment was passed, relative to the mode of supplying the members of such provinces of the monarchy as, from their distance from the place of assembly, or from being in the possession of the enemy, could not assemble for the purpose of choosing representatives. It was provided, with a view to the choice of deputies to represent those provinces of America or Asia which could not, by reason of their distance, be summoned in time, that the regency should ap-

Jan. 29.

* *Ante*, vii. 628.

point an electoral junta, composed of six persons, natives of those regions, who should choose, by a double ballot, twenty-six deputies out of a list of persons, also natives of the same districts, who happened to be at that time in Spain, made up by a committee of the Cortes. In like manner, to fill up the representation of the provinces in the occupation of the enemy, another electoral junta was appointed by the regency, composed of six other individuals, natives of those districts, who were to choose, by a double ballot, four members for each of such provinces out of a list furnished by the Cortes. The provinces, in regard to which representatives were to be chosen in this manner, comprised the whole of Spain, with the exception of Galicia, Asturias, and part of Catalonia; so that the great majority of the Cortes was necessarily composed of persons elected in the city of Cadiz; and the powers of the assembly thus elected were sufficiently extensive, for they embraced a general remodelling of the whole laws and constitutions of the monarchy.[1]

[1] Proclamation of Junta, Jan. 29, 1810. Tor. iii. 464. Pieces Just.

With regard to the legislative business of the assembly, it was provided that all propositions for changes in the laws should be submitted, in the first instance, to the two chambers, and, if passed by them, be sent up to the regency, in place of the crown, for approval; but the regency might, in the first instance, refuse their consent, and remit the bill to the chambers for reconsideration. If, however, it was then approved by two-thirds of both houses, it was to return to the regency, who were bound to adhibit their signature to it within the space of three days, on the expiry of which it became law, with *or without* the royal sanction.[2]

Enactments regarding the passing of laws by the Cortes.

[2] Ibid. Tor. iii. 464. Pieces Just.

Strongly as these fundamental provisions savoured

CHAP. LXI.

1810.

Character of the population in Cadiz, and the municipality within its walls.

Jan. 29.

of popular restrictions on the royal authority, their effect became doubly powerful from the circumstances of the city, and character of the population, in which the sittings of the Cortes took place. The Junta, immediately before the resignation of their authority, passed two resolutions, by the first of which the liberty of the press was established in the most ample manner during the whole sitting of the Cortes, and in the place of its deliberations; while, by the second, none of their own members were declared eligible for the approaching national convention. After their resignation, and before the assembly of the Cortes, the regency of six, to whom the supreme authority had been confided, insensibly sunk into insignificance; and the Municipal Junta of Cadiz, elected by the whole householders of the city, rapidly rose to the highest influence and consideration. It may easily be conceived what was the character of a municipality elected, in a great commercial city, by universal household suffrage in a moment of mingled terror, enthusiasm, and patriotic fervour. Its population of a hundred and fifty thousand souls, increased at that period by nearly a hundred thousand strangers, who had taken refuge within its impregnable walls, from all parts of the Peninsula, naturally democratic in its tendency, was then in the most violent state of effervescence; the Central Junta, under whose government so many disasters had been experienced, had fallen into universal obloquy; and the ardent, inexperienced multitude, who had lost or suffered so much in the course of the contest, not unnaturally concluded that they were all to be ascribed to the ignorance or incapacity of former rulers, and that the only chance of salvation for the country was to be found in the substitution of the vigour

of popular for the imbecility of aristocratic direction.[1]

1810.

The great majority of the Municipal Junta accordingly was, from the very first, strongly tinctured with republican sentiments. Their incessant object was to augment their own power, and depress that of every other authority in the state; and nothing but the presence of the large military force of the allied nations within the fortress, amounting to twenty-seven thousand men, prevented them from breaking out into all the excesses of the French Revolution. Though restrained in this way from such atrocities, however, the revolutionary action soon became so violent as to gain the entire civil direction of the Government clubs, in which democratic sentiments of the most violent kind, uttered amidst thunders of applause, abounded in all quarters of the city. The public press shared in the general excitation. The most licentious and profligate works of the French metropolis were translated, sold at a low price, and greedily devoured by the excited populace. One of the most popular journals indicated the public feeling by taking the title of the "Spanish Robespierre;" and when the few members of the Junta, who really were elected by the provinces, arrived at Cadiz in the beginning of March, the torrent had become irresistible, and they found themselves instantly swept away by a wave of democratic fury.[1]

[1] Hard. xi. 145, 146. South. iv. 284, 286. Tor. iii. 184, 187.

[1] Hard. xi. 169, 172. Tor. iii. 186, 187. Southey, iv. 285, 286.

Persecution of the members of the Central Junta. Feb. 1810.

The principal members of the late Central Junta which had governed Spain, if not with credit or success, at least with constancy and courage during fourteen months of almost continued disasters, were speedily exposed to persecution and violence from this infuriated party. Count Tilly and Don Lorenzo

CHAP. LXI.

1810.

Calvo were arrested and thrown into prison on a charge of treason to the Spanish cause, on grounds so clearly futile and unfounded, that public opinion, excited as it was, could not support the measure, and the latter was acquitted and liberated after a long confinement by the Cortes. All the other members of the Junta were proceeded against in the same vague manner, and searched or imprisoned without the vestige of ground but that, which they shared with all Spain, of having been unfortunate. The clamour of the multitude, prevailing alike over the dictates of justice and the principles of reason, insisted on their immediate prosecution with the utmost rigour of the law. Even the venerable name and great services of Jovellanos could not protect his person from contumely, or avert an iniquitous decree which banished him without trial to his own province, there to be placed under the surveillance of the police. Such was the grief which he felt at this undeserved severity, that it embittered his few remaining days, and brought him speedily to the grave. Tilly died in prison without a trial. Calvo, one of the heroes of Saragossa, who had been thrust into a dungeon without a bed in it, was brought to trial after the Cortes met, and acquitted. So violent, however, was the public effervescence, that the British ambassador felt relieved by the imprisonment of these unfortunate functionaries, lest the populace should anticipate the march of legal proceedings, and take the wreaking of their vengeance into their own hands.[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 190, 192, South. iv. 296 and 298.

Having got possession of the government of the country, the regency and municipality of Cadiz were in no hurry to accelerate the assembly of the Cortes, by which a rival and possibly paramount legislative

power might be established in the very seat of their authority. By the decree of the 29th January, that national assembly stood convoked for the 1st March, "if the national defence would permit;" but these words were sufficiently vague to let in the continued blockade of Cadiz as a reason against convoking the Cortes, and furnished a decent pretext to the regency for delaying their assembly. The promised time, accordingly, passed over without any thing being done. Loud clamours in consequence arose, both among the inhabitants of Cadiz and various deputies from the juntas of different provinces, who had taken refuge within its walls; and the ferment at length became so violent, that the Government deemed it necessary to yield to the torrent, and issued a decree for the convocation of the Cortes. Great difficulties, however, were experienced in determining the principle on which the members were to be summoned, and still more in filling up the returns of deputies from the districts occupied by the enemy. Another question of still more importance was, whether the Cortes should sit in a *single*, or in two chambers, as the decree of the late Junta had provided. At length, after a vehement discussion, it was determined that the ancient mode of election should be completely changed, and that the assembly should sit in a single chamber.[1]

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

Circumstances which preceded and attended the assembly of the Cortes.

June 18.

[1] Tor. iii. 342, 347, South. v. 75.

The mode of election formerly had been various in different provinces; but in all, the principle of the representation of, and election by, the three *orders* had been more or less clearly established: a principle, indeed, which was universal in the middle ages in all the European communities, and may be considered as the distinctive mark of European civilisation.

It was followed and given effect to by the division of the Cortes into the three chambers, or

CHAP. LXI.

1810.

estamento of the nobles, the clergy, and the commons, each of which had a negative on any legislative measure. The members for the boroughs were in general chosen by their magistrates, not their inhabitants; but there was no fixed rule, and ancient custom regulated the franchise and its mode of exercise. It was now determined, however, by the regency, in opposition to the strenuous advice of the illustrious Jovellanos, that the principle of the elections should not be as of old, the representation of ranks or of *orders*, but of *individuals*; and as a consequence of this, that the elective franchise should be thrown to every Spaniard domiciled in the country, of the age of twenty-five years. One deputy was to be returned for every fifty thousand souls in the rural districts; one by every borough which formerly returned a member; and one by every provincial junta, in consideration of their services during the war. The whole of the deputies, thus elected by universal suffrage, were to sit in one chamber: the nobles and the church had no separate representatives. In this assembly, therefore, the Dukes of Medina Cœli, or Del Infantado, or the Archbishop of Toledo, had no more influence than a simple mechanic. How long would the institutions of England, with its calm judgment, old habits, and Anglo-Saxon descent, withstand the dissolving influence of a *single* constituent assembly vested with unbounded legislative power, elected and conducting business in such a manner? Not one week. What, then, was to be expected from the fervent spirit and inexperienced ambition of Andalusia, suddenly invested with supreme uncontrolled power, under the burning sun, and within the beleaguered walls of Cadiz?[1]

The election is based on numbers, not interests.

[1] Tor. iii. 342, 351. South. v. 75, 85.

Perilous as were the elements of legislation thus

thrown together in the national assembly of Spain, the danger was materially augmented by the steps taken to fill up the supplementary members for the provinces beyond seas, and those in the occupation of the enemy. By an edict published in the beginning of September, it was provided that the number chosen from the provinces beyond seas should be twenty-eight, and for the conquered provinces forty; and that both the electors and the elected should be taken from the persons belonging to those districts who had then taken refuge in Cadiz. Thus, one part of the Cortes was composed of deputies chosen by universal suffrage in the cities and provinces of Spain yet unoccupied by the enemy; and the remainder made up of refugees, selected by the same promiscuous mode of choice from the excited crowd who encumbered the streets of that great commercial emporium. No restrictions of any sort were imposed on the choice of any of the members: it was only necessary that the deputy should be above twenty-five, born in the province for which he was chosen, and unconvicted of any crime. It is remarkable that a proceeding so perfectly novel and revolutionary as this formation of the Cortes, to which the entire remodeling of the Spanish constitution was entrusted, not only met with no opposition at Cadiz, but was cordially supported by men of all parties, even the most exalted functionaries, and the stanchest supporters of the ancient order of things: another proof among the many which history affords, that revolutions are diseases of the national mind, which, however they may be strengthened by the discontents or suffering of the lower orders, really originate in the infatuation of the higher;[1] and that the class who invariably put the fatal weapon into the hand of the

Election of the supplementary members of Cortes. Sep. 8.

1 Martignac sur l'Espagne, 94, 95. Tor. iii. 349, 356. South. v. 78, 85. Hard. xi. 170, 172.

CHAP. LXI.

masses, are those who are ultimately to be swept away by their fury.

1810.

Election of the Cortes itself.

The deluded patriots who had thus conceded irrevocable power to a faction totally unfit to wield it, were not long of perceiving the consequences to which their blind trust in republican virtue in a corrupted society were likely to lead. As the day for the elections and filling up the supplementary seats drew nigh, the public effervescence hourly increased. Clubs, juntas, assemblies, resounded on all sides; the press multiplied in extent and increased in violence; and that general anxiety was felt, which, by a strange instinct in the moral, equally as the physical world, precedes the heaving of the earthquake. It was soon found that the torrent was irresistible; rank, experience, age, learning, consideration, were almost every where disregarded in the candidates; and republican zeal, loud professions, vehement declamation, impassioned eloquence, constituted the only passports to public favour. Before the elections, three-fourths of which were conducted within the walls of Cadiz, were half over, it had become evident that the democratic party had acquired a decisive ascendency. Then, and not till then, a large proportion of those who had supported or acquiesced in these frantic innovations, became sensible of their error, tried to pause in their career, and soon began to declaim loudly against the Cortes of their own creation. But it was too late—popular passion was not only excited, but unchained; and the march of revolution had become inevitable, because aristocratic infatuation had installed democratic ambition in supreme power.[1]

1 Tor. iii. 355, 357. Martignac, 94, 95.

On the 24th September the Cortes thus constituted commenced its sittings; that was the first day of

the SPANISH REVOLUTION. They began, like the French National Assembly in 1789, with religious ceremonies, and the forms of the monarchy. High mass was celebrated in their presence by the Archbishop Bourbon, and an oath binding them to maintain the Roman Catholic faith, the integrity of the monarchy, the rights of Ferdinand VII., and the national institutions, so far as not requiring amendment, administered to and taken by all the members. From thence they adjourned to the hall prepared for their reception in the principal theatre of the city; and then it soon appeared that the influence to which they were exposed would speedily prove fatal alike to the religion, the monarchy, and the constitution of the country. The saloon was spacious and elegant; but the immense crowds of both sexes who occupied, as spectators, the upper tier of boxes, and the vehement applause with which all the most violent republican sentiments were received, soon demonstrated that the Cortes were to be subjected to that external seduction and intimidation which a popular assembly is rarely, if ever, able to resist. From the outset, accordingly, the character of their proceedings was pronounced; it at once appeared that a new era in the domestic history of the Peninsula had arisen. The preceding movement, although violent and sanguinary, had, with a few local exceptions, been of a different character—it was national and anti-Gallican—this was social and democratic. Though still engaged in the French war, and resisting with unconquerable firmness alike the open hostility and insidious propositions of the French ruler, the principal object of the Cortes after this was not foreign but domestic; it was not external independence, but internal reform on which their hearts were set; and, trusting

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

Opening and early proceedings of the Cortes. Sept. 24.

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

to the impregnable walls of Cadiz for their immediate security, and to the English arms for their ultimate deliverance, they concentrated all their efforts upon the dissemination of republican institutions, and the establishment of republican ascendency in their country. In this effort they were from the very first completely triumphant, and incalculable results in both hemispheres have flowed from their success.[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 356, 363. Mart. 97, 98.

Proclaim the sovereignty of the people.

The very first resolution with which the Cortes commenced was decisive of the character of the Assembly, and destructive of the institutions of a mixed monarchy. It bore, "That the deputies who compose the Congress, and represent the Spanish nation, declare themselves legitimately constituted in the general and extraordinary Cortes, *in which is placed the national sovereignty.*" The members of the regency were required to swear obedience "to the sovereignty of the nation, represented by the Cortes, and to obey its decrees." These, and many similar resolutions, were carried unanimously amidst the loud applause of the members and galleries; the debates were prolonged till midnight, amidst a delirium of unanimity; extempore speeches, unknown hitherto in Southern Europe, fraught with eloquence, bespoke at once the ability and fervour of the speakers; and the Regency, with the exception of the Bishop of Orense, who had courage enough to resist the innovation, abandoned by all, and confounded by the violence of the torrent, took the oath at four in the following morning, and thereby virtually converted the monarchy into a "democracy."[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 361, 375, South. vi. 84, 87.

Having gained this great triumph, the Cortes were not long of following up the advantage. On the very next day, it was declared that they should be addressed by the title of majesty, and that all

the authorities, civil, ecclesiastical, and military, should take the oath in the same terms as the regents had done. Alarmed at the responsibility thus imposed upon them by so excited an assembly, the regency anxiously requested an explanation of the meaning of the Cortes in this particular; but all that they could obtain was a vague declaration, "that their duties embraced the security and defence of the country, and that the responsibility which was exacted from the members of the regency excluded only the absolute inviolability of the person of the King." The Bishop of Orense, with patriotic fervour, endeavoured to stem the torrent: he openly combated the oath exacted from the regency, and denounced in no measured terms the usurpation of supreme power of which the Cortes had been guilty. No one, however, had courage sufficient to imitate the example of his firmness; and, after several months spent in fruitless resistance, he was forced to submit, and withdrew to his diocess in Galicia, to shun, if he could not prevent, the approaching calamities. The regents being wholly destitute of real authority, and subject to the responsibility of office without its powers, shortly resigned their situations; and they were immediately banished from the Island of Leon, and ordered to reside each in distant places. New functionaries were appointed, more obsequious to the will of the popular assembly; but one of them had the courage to refuse the oath of sovereignty to that body, and it was universally felt that they were merely puppets in the hands of their imperious masters.[1]

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

Fresh assumptions of supreme power by the Cortes.

Feb. 3, 1811.

Oct. 28, 1810.

[1] Tor. iii. 377, 391. South. v. 87, 94.

The most momentous topic which can occupy the attention of a popular government—the liberty of the press—early attracted the notice of the Cortes. In

Decree on the liberty of the press.

CHAP. LXI. 1811. the debates which ensued on this interesting subject, the different parties assumed a regular form and consistency; and it soon appeared how little the ardent spirits who had obtained the command in its deliberations, were inclined to pause in their career from the most awful example which history afforded of the perils attending it. One member openly expressed a wish for a "Christian Robespierre;" another declared that "*un piquenno*" Robespierre was what was required, a person who might establish a system of terror somewhat more moderate than had been used in France. "Caustics," it was said, "is what is called for: matters must be carried on with energy: heads must be struck off, and that speedily: more Spanish blood requires to be shed than French." "The hatchet of the executioner is the only answer to oppose to such arguments," said an infuriated priest; "I am willing to undertake the office of such a debater. We have been assembled six months, and not one head has fallen." These extreme opinions, it is true, were not approved by the majority of the assembly; and several speakers, having the eloquent Arguelles at their head, referred to England as the great example of the unconquerable energy which the freedom of the press can communicate to a nation, at the very time that it spreads the antidote to the passions and the errors of an excited democracy. But the very fact of such opinions being advocated by any party, however extreme, in the legislature, was a clear indication of the perilous torrent which had been let loose; and it was already but too evident that in this, as in all other social contests during the *advance* of a Revolution, the most violent opinions were likely to be the most successful.

Oct. 18. After a protracted debate, which lasted four days, the

freedom of the press was established, under no other qualification than the exception of offences against religion, which were still to be taken cognizance of by the ordinary ecclesiastical courts, and a certain responsibility for individual or political delinquencies, which were to be adjudicated upon in a certain court erected for the purpose. The decree was promulgated in the middle of November; and there immediately issued from the press such a deluge of journals and ephemeral pamphlets, and such unmeasured vehemence of language, as demonstrated both how anxiously the Spanish urban population had thirsted for political discussion, and the imminent danger which they would run from the draught when first administered.[1]

Nov. 10.

[1] Mart. 94, 95. Tor. iii. 415, 428. Diario de Cortes, ii. 441. South. v. 99, 101.

At this period, also, there arose those important discussions between Spain and the South American colonies, which terminated, after a protracted contest and the shedding of oceans of blood, in the independence of those vast and highly interesting states. This topic, however, is too vast for casual discussion, and must be reserved for a subsequent chapter, when it will form the leading subject of consideration.[1]

[1] Vide infra, c. lxviii.

It is remarkable that, from the very first opening of the Cortes, they manifested an impatient anxiety to abolish the separate immunities and privileges of the different provinces of Spain; and the "*Fueros*" of Biscay and Navarre were, in an especial manner, the object of their jealousy. The desire to extinguish them, and establish one uniform constitution for the whole monarchy, formed one of the leading objects of the party in the Spanish cities who urged on the assembly of the Cortes. In pursuance of this desire, a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution on a uniform and systematic plan;

Appointment of a committee to frame a constitution.

Dec. 23, 1811.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

and on its preparation, as might naturally have been expected, the principal attention of all parties at Cadiz was afterwards fixed. It cannot be denied that the project of establishing a perfect equality of civil rights between the members of the same community is equitable in theory, and apparently feasible in practice; but experience has proved that it is, of all other things, the most difficult to carry with safety into execution; and that, unless the inhabitants to whom it is applied are homogeneous in point of race, and equally advanced in point of civilisation, it is likely to produce the most disastrous effects upon the whole fabric of society.[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 445.

Heroic conduct of the Cortes in holding out against the French.

In two important particulars the Cortes faithfully represented the feelings of the Spanish people, and exhibited an example of constancy in adverse fortune, which will be for ever memorable in the annals of the world. They issued a resolute proclamation, in which they declared that they would

Jan. 1, 1811.

"never lay down their arms till they recovered their sovereign, and regained the national independence; that the whole treaties, resignations of the crown, and proceedings at Bayonne, were null and void, as wanting the consent of the nation; that all engagements or obligations undertaken by the king while in captivity were illegal, and of no effect; that they would never bend their knees to the usurper, nor treat for peace so long as a French soldier remained in the Peninsula, which they had invaded with such perfidy, and treated with such injustice." When it is recollected that this decree was issued at a time when the French legions beleaguered the ramparts of Cadiz, and the bombs from their batteries already reached the nearest houses of the city; that the whole of Spain, with the exception of Galicia, Asturias, and

a part of Catalonia and Valencia, were in the possession of the invaders, who had moulded the conquered provinces into a regular government; and that Wellington with his gallant army were then cooped up within the lines of Torres Vedras, with hardly any prospect of being able to take an active part in the deliverance of the Peninsula, and but little hope of maintaining themselves on its soil; it must be confessed that the Spanish historians have good reason to pride themselves on their government, and that the annals of the Roman senate contain nothing more sublime.[1]

[1] Decree, Jan. 1, 1811. Tor. iii. 450. South. v. 102.

The other particular in which the Cortes faithfully represented the sentiments of the Spanish, was in the respect which, in despite of their revolutionary tendency, they evinced to the Roman Catholic faith; not but that there were many of its ardent spirits secretly enemies not merely to the Romish Church, which was there established in its most bigoted form, but to every other species of religious belief; and who longed for that general overthrow of all ecclesiastical establishments, and liberation from all restraints, human and divine, which in old corrupted societies constitutes the real spring of democratic agitation. But they were as yet too few in number to venture openly to promulgate their principles; and unfortunately, when emancipated from the shackles of the Romish creed, they had not judgment and principle enough to revert to the pure tenets of the *Catholic* or universal church, but flew at once into the infidelity and selfishness of the Parisian philosophy. Hence they made no attempts to moderate the fervour of the rural deputies; but, regarding the whole clerical institutions as an

Their rigid adherence to the Romish faith.

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

incubus on the state, which would, erelong, be removed, acquiesced in the mean time in all the declarations of the majority in favour of the ancient faith; and the Cortes exhibited the prodigy, during a few years, of a body animated with the strongest revolutionary principles, and yet professing the most implicit obedience to the rigid principles of the Church of Rome.[1]

[1] South. v. 107, 108. Tor. iii. 418, 423.

Constitution of 1812. March 19. 1812.

The influence of these conflicting principles, and of the antagonist passions which, in every age, have most profoundly agitated society, signally appeared in the constitution, which, after more than a year's discussion in the committee appointed to draw it up, and in the assembly, was finally approved of and sworn to by the Cortes on the 19th March 1812.

Principles of the constitution of 1812.

The leading principles of this celebrated legislative fabric, which has become of such immense importance from subsequent events, were such as might have been expected from the composition of the assembly in which it originated. Supreme sovereignty was declared to reside in the nation; the Roman Catholic faith to be the sole religion of the state; the supreme legislative power to reside in the Cortes. That assembly was alone empowered to vote taxes and levies of men,—to lay down regulations for the armed force,—to nominate the supreme judges,—to create a regency in case of minority, incapacity, or other event suspensive of the succession,—to enforce the responsibility of all public functionaries,—and to introduce and enact laws. During the intervals of the session, the Cortes was to be represented by a permanent commission or deputation, to which a considerable part of its powers was committed, especially the care of watching over the

execution of the laws and conduct of public functionaries, and the convocation of the assembly in case of need.[1]

The person of the king was declared inviolable, and his consent was requisite to the passing of laws; but he could not withhold his consent more than twice to different legislatures; if presented to him a third time, *he was forced to give his sanction.* He had the prerogative of pardon, but circumscribed within very narrow limits; he concluded treaties and truces with foreign powers, but they required for their ratification the consent of the Cortes; he had the command of the army, but all the regulations for its government were to emanate from the same body; he nominated the public functionaries, but from a list only furnished by the Cortes. The king was not to leave the kingdom nor marry without their consent; if he did so, he was to be held as having abdicated the throne. The nomination of the judges of the tribunals, to whose exclusive cognizance the conduct of public functionaries was subjected, was reserved to the same assembly. For the assistance of the king in discharging his royal functions, a privy council, consisting of forty members, was appointed by him out of a list of one hundred and twenty presented by the Cortes: they could not be removed but by that body; and, in that number, there were only to be four grandees and four ecclesiastics. All vacant situations in the church, the bench, and the diplomatic departments, in like manner, were filled up by the king from a list of three presented to him by the Cortes; and he was bound to consult the privy council in all matters of importance, particularly the conclusion of treaties, the

[1] Martignac, 97. Constitution, 1812. Tit. ii. iii. Powers of the king.

CHAP. LXI.

sanction of laws, the declaration of war, and the conclusion of peace.[1]

1812.

Important as these institutions were in their tendency, and strongly as they savoured of that democratic spirit amidst which they were cradled, they yet yielded in magnitude to the vitality of the changes in the election and composition of the Cortes, which were established by the same constitution. It was carried by a large majority that the assembly should sit, as it was then constituted, in a single chamber, without, as of old, any separate place of assembly for the clergy or nobles, or any veto or power of rejection being vested in their members apart from those of the commons. Population was made the basis of representation: it was declared that there should be a member for every seventy thousand souls; and that every man above the age of twenty-five, a native of the province, or who had resided in it for seven years, was qualified alike to elect or be elected. No property was for the present insisted on as a qualification; but it was left to future Cortes to legislate on this important point. The election of members took place by three successive steps of parishes, districts, and provinces; but the boroughs, who sent members to the ancient assemblies, and the juntas, who were admitted to the representation in the present, were alike excluded. The American colonies were placed on a perfect equality, in the article of representation, with the European provinces of the monarchy; the ministers, councillors, and persons in the household of the king, were excluded from a seat in the assembly; the Cortes were to assemble every year, and sit at least three months for the dispatch of business; no

[1] Mart. 17, 98. Tor. iv. 341, 342. Constitution of the Cortes.

member of it was to be capable of holding any office under the crown; it was to be re-elected every two years, and no individual who had been the member of one assembly, could be re-elected till a different legislature had intervened; so that the new Cortes, every two years, was to present an entire new set of members from that which had preceded it.[1]

[1] Tor. iv. 328, 331.

Such was the famous constitution of 1812—the Magna Charta of southern revolutionary Europe—the model on which the subsequent democratic constitutions of Spain, Portugal, Piedmont, and Naples, in 1820, were framed; the brand which has filled the world with its flames, and from the conflagration raised by which both hemispheres are still burning. To an Englishman practically acquainted with the working of a free constitution, it is needless to expatiate on the necessary effect of vesting such powers in the people of an old state. If he reflects how long the institutions of England, habituated as she has been to the strain by centuries of freedom, would withstand the influence of universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, the abolition of the House of Peers, the withdrawing of the legislative veto from the sovereign, an entire change of legislators every two years, and the practical vesting of the disposal of all offices of importance in the House of Commons; he will easily understand what must have been the result of such a system among a people of mixed blood and hostile passions, of fiery temperament and towering ambition; long subjected to despotism, wholly unused to freedom; among whom political fervour was as yet untamed by suffering, and philanthropic ardour uncooled by experience; where property, accumulated in huge masses among the nobles and clergy, was but scantily diffused through

Its vast effect in stimulating political passions in the Peninsula.

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

the middle classes; and instruction was still more thinly scattered among any ranks of the people. But it was the fatal peculiarity of this constitution, that it so obviously and immediately opened the avenue to supreme power to the urban constituencies, and so entirely shut out and disinherited the rural nobility, and ecclesiastic orders and rural population, that it necessarily bequeathed the seeds of interminable discord between these classes to future ages; because it gave a definite object and intelligible war-cry to the minority, massed together and in possession of the principal seats of influence, in towns, while it established a system altogether insupportable to the majority, tenfold greater but scattered and destitute of defence or rallying points in the country.

Manner in which the constitution was received in Spain.

The reception which the new constitution met with in Spain, was such as might have been expected from so great an innovation in a country in which the urban constituencies were so zealous for innovation, and the rural inhabitants were so firmly attached to the institutions of their fathers. At Cadiz, Barcelona, Valencia, and in general all the great towns, especially those of a commercial habit, the enthusiasm of the people at this great addition to their power was loudly and sincerely expressed: in the lesser boroughs in the interior, and in all the rural districts, where revolutionary ideas had not spread, and the ancient faith and loyalty were still all powerful, it was the object of unqualified hatred. In vain the partisans of the new *régime* sought to persuade the people that the constitution was but a return to the old usages of the monarchy, cleared of the corruptions and abuses of ages: the good sense of the country inhabitants revolted at the idea that

the King of Spain of old had been merely a puppet in the hands of the populace; the clergy could never see a confirmation of their privileges in institutions which, on the other side of the Pyrenees, had led to their total overthrow; the nobles beheld, in the concentration of all power in the hands of an assembly elected by universal suffrage, the certain forerunner of their total ruin. The provinces in the occupation of the French, who had sent no representatives to the Isle of Leon, embracing three-fourths of the monarchy, loudly complained that their rights and privileges had been reft from them by an assembly almost wholly elected at Cadiz, to which they were entire strangers. Thus, the whole country population were unanimous in their detestation of the new order of things; and it was easy to foresee that, if the matter were to be determined by the nation itself, it would be rejected by an immense majority: but the partisans of the new constitution, though few in number, were incomparably better organized and favourably situated for active operations than their antagonists; and, being already in possession of all the strongholds of the kingdom, it was hard to say to which party, in the event of a struggle, victory might ultimately incline.[1]

[1] Martignac, i. 99, 100.

Wellington's clear perception and curious predictions of the effects of the Cortes and new Constitution.

Wellington, from the very first, clearly perceived, and loudly denounced, the pernicious tendency of these measures on the part of the Spanish Cortes, not merely as diverting the attention of the Government from the national defence, and wasting their time in fruitless discussions when the enemy was at their gates; but as tending to establish democratic principles and republican institutions in a country wholly unfitted for them, and which would leave to future ages the seeds of interminable discord in the

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

Spanish monarchy. His prophecies, which are to be found profusely scattered throughout the latter volumes of his correspondence, little attended to at the time from the absorbing interest of the contest with Napoleon, have now acquired an extraordinary interest, from the exact and melancholy accomplishment which subsequent events have given to his predictions. Before the Cortes had been assembled six weeks, he expressed to his brother, Henry Wellesley, then ambassador at Cadiz, his apprehensions that they were about to follow the usual course of democratic assemblies, and draw to themselves, in opposition to the wishes of the great bulk of the nation, the whole powers of government.* As they advanced in their career, and experience began to develop the practical result of their administration in the provinces, he repeatedly expressed his conviction of the general dissatisfaction which they had excited.[1]†

[1] Gurw. vi. 559, ix. 524, x. 54.

But after his visit to Cadiz, on occasion of being

* "The natural course of all popular assemblies of the Spanish Cortes, among others, is to adopt democratic principles, and to vest all the powers of the state in their own body; and this assembly must take care that they do not run in this tempting course, as the wishes of the nation are decidedly for a monarchy. By a monarchy alone it can be governed; and their inclination to any other form of government, and their assumption of the power and patronage of the state into their own hands, would immediately deprive them of the confidence of the people, and render them a worse government, and more impotent, because more numerous than the central junta."—WELLINGTON *to* WELLESLEY, *Nov.* 4, 1810. GURWOOD, vi. 559.

† "The Cortes are unpopular every where, and in my opinion deservedly so. Nothing can be more cruel, absurd, and impolitic, than their decrees respecting the persons who have served the enemy. It is extraordinary that the revolution in Spain has not produced one man with any knowledge of the real situation of the country. It appears as if they were all drunk; thinking and speaking of any other subject than Spain."—WELLINGTON *to* WELLESLEY, 1*st Nov.* 1812. GURWOOD, ix. 524.

appointed generalissimo of the Spanish armies in January 1813, he denounced, in the strongest terms, the wretched government, at once tyrannical at home and weak abroad, which the furious democracy of that city had produced; and predicted the ruinous effect, both upon the fate of the war and the future prospects of the monarchy, of the constitution which they had established.* His words, after a close personal view of the working of the democratic constitution, are deserving of profound attention, as marking the impression produced on an intellect of the highest order, by a state of things arising from the success of popular ambition, and therefore of lasting interest to mankind. "The greatest objection which I have to the new constitution is, that in a country in which almost all property consists in land, and there are the largest landed proprietors which exist in Europe, no measure should have been adopted, and no barrier provided, to guard landed property from the encroachments, injustice, and violence, to which it is at all times liable, but particularly in the progress of revolutions. The Council of State affords no such

1812.

His clear opinion on the subject after visiting Cadiz in Spring 1813.

* It is impossible to describe the state of confusion in which affairs are at Cadiz. The Cortes have formed a constitution very much on the principle that a painter paints a picture, viz. to be looked at; and I have not met one of its members, or any person of any description, either at Cadiz or elsewhere, who considers the constitution as the embodying of a system according to which Spain is or can be governed. The Cortes have in form divested themselves of the executive power, and appointed a regency for that purpose; but the regency are in fact the slaves of the Cortes; and neither have either communication in a constitutional way with each other, nor any authority beyond the walls of Cadiz. I wish that some of our reformers would go to Cadiz to see the benefit of a sovereign popular assembly, calling itself "Majesty," and of a written constitution. In truth, there is no authority in the state except the libellous newspapers, and they certainly ride over both Cortes and Regency without mercy."—WELLINGTON *to* LORD BATHURST, *Cadiz, 27th Jan.* 1813. GURWOOD, x. 54.

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

guard; it has no influence in the legislature; it can have no influence over the public mind. Such a guard can only be afforded by the establishment of an assembly of the great landed proprietors, such as our House of Lords, having concurrent powers with the Cortes; and you may depend upon it, there is no man in Spain, be his property never so small, who is not interested in the establishment of such an assembly. Unhappily, legislative assemblies are swayed by the fears and passions of individuals; when unchecked, they are tyrannical and unjust; nay, more, it frequently happens that the most tyrannical and unjust measures are the most popular. Those measures are particularly popular which deprive rich and powerful individuals of their properties under the pretence of the public advantage; and I tremble for a country in which, as in Spain, there is no barrier for the preservation of private property, excepting the justice of a legislative assembly possessing supreme power. It is impossible to calculate upon the plans of such an assembly: they have no check whatever, and they are governed by the most ignorant and licentious of all licentious presses, that of Cadiz. I believe they mean to attack the royal and feudal tenths, and the tithes of the church, under pretence of encouraging agriculture; and finding the contributions from these sources not so extensive as they expected, they will seize the estates of the grandees."[1] "Our character is involved in a greater degree than we are aware of, in the democratical transactions of the Cortes, in the opinion of all moderate well-thinking Spaniards, and, I am afraid, with the rest of Europe. It is quite impossible such a system can last: what I regret is, that I am the person who maintains it. If the King

[1] Wellington to Don Diego de la Vega. Jan. 29, 1813, and Earl Bathurst, April 21, 1813. Gurw. x. 64, 65, and 247, xi. 91.

should return, he also will overturn the whole fabric if he has any spirit; but the gentlemen at Cadiz are so completely masters, that I am afraid there must be another convulsion."

Policy of the British Government regarding the Cortes.

The British Government were well aware, while democratic frenzy was thus reigning triumphant at Cadiz, from the despatches of their ambassador there, the Honourable H. Wellesley, as well as from Wellington's information of the dangerous nature of the spirit which had thus been evolved, that they had a task of no ordinary difficulty to encounter, in any attempt to moderate its transports. The Spanish people, long and proverbially jealous of foreign interference, had recently evinced this peculiarity in so remarkable a degree, that even when defeated in a hundred encounters, and bleeding at every pore from the want of any general competent to stem the progress of disaster, and give unity to the operations of their different armies, they still refused to give the command to the British hero who had arrested at Talavera the tide of success, and rolled back from Torres Vedras the wave of conquest, even though he has recorded his opinion, that, if they had done so, he could have saved their country as he did Portugal.* In these circumstances, any decided or marked interference on the part of Great Britain with the proceedings either of the Cortes at Cadiz, or of the regency in its formation, would not only, in all probability, have totally failed in its object, but pos-

* "I understand the Spanish Government may perhaps offer me the command of their armies. If they had done so a year and a half ago, and they had set seriously to work to feed and pay their army, the cause would have been saved; nay, it would have been saved without such an arrangement, if the battle of Ocana had not been fought in November 1809.—WELLINGTON *to* LORD LIVERPOOL, 2*d Feb.* 1811. GURWOOD, vii. 216.

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

sibly cooled their ardour in the cause of independence, and thrown the party in Spain, in possession of the few remaining strongholds it possessed, headlong into the arms of the enemy. In these circumstances, the British Cabinet, albeit noways insensible to the dangers of the republican government which had thus grown up, as it were, under their very wing at Cadiz, and its strange inconsistency with their own principle, as well as those on which the war had been conducted, nevertheless deemed it expedient not to intermeddle with the internal affairs of their ally, and to comply literally with the advice of Wellington, "to keep themselves clear of the democracy, and to interfere in nothing while the government was in their hands, excepting in carrying on the war and keeping out the foreign enemy."[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst. Sept. 5, 1813. Gurw. xi. 91.

Abortive attempt to effect the liberation of Ferdinand VII.

It was chiefly with a view, however, to obtain a legitimate head for the government at Cadiz, and if possible extricate Spain by legal means from the abyss into which she was falling, that the English Cabinet at this time made a serious attempt to effect the deliverance of Ferdinand VII. from his imprisonment at Valençay. The captive king, and his brother Don Carlos, were there detained, living sumptuously, but so narrowly watched as to render their escape apparently impossible. Notwithstanding all the vigilance of the police, however, the British Government contrived to communicate with him by means of the Baron Kolli, a man of skilful address and intrepid character, in whom the Marquis Wellesley had entire confidence. The project for their deliverance, when on the point of succeeding, was betrayed by an agent to whom a subordinate part in its execution had been committed. Ferdinand himself revealed the plot to his jailers, and Kolli was

March 24, 1810.

arrested and committed to Vincennes. He refused, however, with unshaken constancy, to divulge anything which could involve either Ferdinand or the British Ministry; but the French police took advantage of the discovery they had made, to endeavour to entrap the royal captives into some hazardous attempt by means of a false Kolli, who was despatched to Valençay; but the penetration of the Spanish king detected the disguise, and nothing followed on the insidious attempt.[1]

[1] Hard. xi. 150. Bign. ix. 448.

The military condition of the French in Spain, notwithstanding the disastrous issue of the expedition into Portugal, had been essentially improved, so far as the command of the resources of the country went, in the course of the campaign of 1810. The successful irruption of Soult into Andalusia, in its commencement, had given them the entire command of the resources of that opulent province; and although the dispersion of force which it occasioned, in consequence of the continued resistance of Cadiz, proved in the end, as the event showed, extremely detrimental to their interests in the Peninsula; yet in the first instance it greatly augmented their resources, and diffused the pleasing hope which seems to have gained possession of all the counsellors of Joseph, that the war was at length approaching its termination. So completely did hostilities appear to be concluded to the south of the Sierra Morena, that Joseph Buonaparte crossed that formidable barrier; published at Cordova an ominous decree, in which he declared, that if Spain "became again the friend of France, it was for the interest of Napoleon to preserve its integrity, if not, to dismember and destroy it;" entered Seville amidst the acclamations of the higher class of citizens, who were fatigued with

Military condition of the French in Spain in spring 1811.

Feb. 5, 1810.

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

the war and hopeless of its success; received from the civic authorities there the standards taken at the battle of Baylen; accepted the services of a royal guard, organized for his service in the southern provinces; and, amidst the apparent transport of the people, arrived at the lines before Cadiz, and made the tour of the bay almost within reach of the Spanish batteries. Seduced by these flattering appearances, the benevolent monarch appears for a time to have trusted the pleasing hope that his difficulties were at an end; that all classes of Spaniards would at length rally round his standard; and that, supported by his faithful population, he might at length obtain not merely the shadow but the substance of a throne, emancipated from the burdensome tutelage of his imperial brother.[1]

[1] Bign. ix. 269, 271. Hard. xi. 151.

Napoleon's intentions as to dismembering Spain at this time. Feb. 8.

But if Joseph for a brief period gave way to this pleasing illusion, he was not long of being awakened from it by the acts of Napoleon himself. Early in February a decree was issued by him, which organized into four governments the provinces of Catalonia, Aragon, Biscay, and Navarre; and charged the military governor of each of them with the entire direction of affairs, civil and military. The police, the administration of justice, the collection and disposal of the revenue, were intrusted to them equally with the warlike arrangements of the provinces; and the fundamental condition on which this more than regal power was held by the marshals was, that they should make no demands on the Imperial Treasury, and that the provinces under their command should feed, clothe, lodge, and pay the numerous French corps who occupied their territory. Deeper designs, however, than the temporary occupation of a portion of the

Spanish monarchy, the whole of which was overrun by his troops, were involved in this decree of the Emperor; and what these designs were are explained in a letter at the same period from the Duke of Cadore (Champagny) to the French ambassador at Madrid:—"The intentions of the Emperor is to *unite to France the whole left bank of the Ebro*, and perhaps the territory as far as the Douro. One of the objects of the decree is to prepare for that annexation; and you will take care, without letting a hint fall as to the designs of the Emperor, to prepare matters for this change, and facilitate all the measures which his Majesty may take to carry it into execution." Thus Napoleon, after having solemnly guaranteed the integrity of Spain, first by the treaty of Fontainbleau to Ferdinand VII., and again by that of Bayonne to Joseph, was now preparing, in violation of both engagements, to seize a large part, and which commanded the whole remainder of its territory, by the spoliation of his own brother, whom he had put upon the throne.[1]

CHAP. LXI. 1810. Feb. 19. 1810.

[1] Champagny to Delaforest. Feb. 19, 1810. Bign. ix. 270, 274.

Notwithstanding all the precautions of the Emperor, however, to keep his designs secret, they transpired so far as to awaken in Joseph the most anxious solicitude as to the preservation of his crown, and the integrity of his dominions. To avert the stroke as far as possible, under pretence of congratulating his brother on his marriage with the Austrian archduchess, he despatched M. Asanza to Paris, an intrepid and able Spaniard, zealous for the interests of his country, and peculiarly solicitous of preserving the province of his birth, Navarre, for the crown of Castile. Asanza, on his arrival at Paris, found that the expense of the Spanish war, which it was said had already cost the Imperial Treasury

Negotiation between Napoleon and Joseph for the dismemberment of Spain.

CHAP. LXI. 1810. above two hundred millions of francs (£8,000,000), was the great subject of complaint with the Cabinet of St Cloud; and without openly divulging the project of incorporating with France the territory north of the Ebro, Champagny made no secret of the wish of the Emperor to obtain, and his right to demand, more valuable indemnities than the barren satisfaction of having placed an incapable and prodigal brother on the throne of Madrid. When Asanza pleaded strongly for the integrity of Spain, and the obligation of the Emperor to support his brother, he was openly told by the Imperial Minister, that, strong as the Emperor's obligations to the members of his family were, his obligations to France were still stronger; and that "Joseph would do well to recollect that he held in his power the Prince of Asturias, Ferdinand, whom he was strongly tempted to send into Spain, and who would make no scruple, as the price of his liberty, to cede the required provinces, or any thing else which might be required of him." Asanza, unable either to fathom the secret intentions or get any satisfaction as to the public deeds of the Emperor, returned downcast to Madrid, where general gloom had succeeded to the first transports of joy among the adherents of Joseph at the conquest of Andalusia; and unequivocal acts on the part of Napoleon soon demonstrated his real designs, and at what price he estimated the phantom of a king which he had established in Spain. A new decree, in addition to that which had created the four military governments already established, formed two new ones, embracing the whole country to the north of the Douro; the first, comprising the province of Burgos; the second, those of Valladolid, Palencia, and Toro: and this was soon followed by a second, which gave Soult the exclusive

Asanza's letter. July 20, 1810.

May 29.

Aug. 2.

direction of the army and the provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena. Thus, while Suchet was actively conducting the work of conquest in Catalonia and Valencia, and Soult was living in more than regal magnificence at Seville, the unhappy Joseph, almost destitute of resources, lingered on, a shadow at Madrid, without either being entrusted with the duties, or enjoying the splendour of royalty.[1]* CHAP. LXI. 1810. [1] See Asanza to Joseph. July 1811. Bign. ix. 278, 285. Hard. xi. 152, 155.

Napoleon's favourite project of securing the northern provinces of Portugal for himself soon assumed a more tangible form, and became the subject of open negotiation with the Cabinet of Madrid. In this negotiation the plenipotentiaries of Spain in vain appealed to the treaty of Bayonne, by which the integrity of the monarchy was guaranteed: Champagny replied, in the name of the Emperor, and from his notes, that the convention of Bayonne had *de facto* disappeared, by the majority of its members having passed over to the insurgents; that Spain owed a large indemnity for the sacrifices in men and money which he had made in her behalf; and that, as she could never repay the debt, he must insist on the cession of the whole provinces to the north of the Ebro, including Catalonia, for ten years. Finding the Emperor resolute, the Spanish plenipotentiaries strove only to gain time: the more pressing concerns of the north engrossed his attention; and, before his dominion in the Peninsula was so well established as to render it practicable to carry the transference formally into effect, the whole country was reft from Efforts of the Spanish envoys to prevent it.

* The letters of Asanza to the Court of Madrid were intercepted by the guerillas, forwarded to Cadiz, and published by the Regency. Wellington quotes, and Bignon refers to them without either throwing the slightest doubt on their authenticity or accuracy.—*See* BIGNON, ix 280.

CHAP. LXI.

1811.

both by the arms of England, and the star of Napoleon set for ever behind the snows of Russia.[1]

[1] Bign. ix. 285, 287. Hard. xi. 154, 155.

Such, however, was the destitution to which the Court of Madrid was reduced, during the whole of the winter of 1810 and spring of 1811, that in January 1811, Joseph intimated to Napoleon "that the French marshals intercepted his revenue, disregarded his orders, insulted his government, and oppressed and ruined his country. He himself had been appointed to the throne of Spain without his own consent; and, though he would never oppose the Emperor's will, yet he would not live a degraded king; and, therefore, he was ready to resign, unless the Emperor would come in person and remedy the evils." Struck with the decision of this announcement, and the obvious justice of the complaints on which it was founded, the Emperor so far interposed in behalf of his unhappy brother, as to fix, by an imperial edict, the monthly sums at which the allowance of the whole military officers of the Peninsula, from the marshals, governors of provinces, to the sub-lieutenants, should be fixed; and directed that 500,000 francs (£20,000) should be remitted monthly from Paris to defray the most urgent demands of his household. This relief, however, proved altogether insufficient. The whole civil functionaries of the Crown were seven months in arrear of their salaries; the public treasury was empty; the king had not money at his disposal to give a respectable dinner to the ambassadors; and he was incessantly besieged with complaints of oppression, which he had no means of relieving. To such a height at length did the mortifications of the Court of Madrid arrive, and so completely were all the royal revenues intercepted by the legal or illegal exactions of the marshals, that, in the

Joseph in disgust at length resigns his crown. Jan. 19. 1811.

Jan. 28, 1811.

beginning of May, Joseph set out with his resignation in his pocket, and, to Napoleon's no small embarrassment, arrived in Paris to lay it at his feet. Thus was the prodigy exhibited, not merely of three brothers of a soldier of fortune in Corsica being elevated by that soldier to European thrones; but of two of them, Louis and Joseph, being reduced to such mortifications, by his imperious temper and rigorous exactions, that they renounced their crowns to escape them; while a third, Lucien, had taken refuge from his persecution in the dominions of his most persevering and inveterate enemy.[1]

CHAP. LXI. 1811. May 29, 1811. See Joseph's papers taken at Vittoria. Nap. iv. 517, 533. App.

Napoleon, who was well aware what a subject of scandal these divisions in the Imperial family would afford to Europe, and how strongly they would confirm the declamations of the English press against the insupportable nature of his rule, did his utmost to appease the incensed monarch. Partly by argument, partly by persuasion, partly by threats, he prevailed on the fugitive king to place again on his head his crown of thorns; and, after some weeks' residence at Paris, he returned to Madrid, having concluded a private treaty, which in some degree obviated the most intolerable of his grievances. By this compact it was stipulated that the Army of the Centre should be placed directly under the orders of the King of Spain: he was to receive a quarter of the contributions levied by the marshals in their several provinces, for the maintenance of his court and government, and for the support of the Army of the Centre, and of the Spaniards who had enlisted in his service, who amounted to nearly thirty thousand men; and the half million of francs, hitherto given monthly to the king, was to be increased to a million. But the Emperor would not relinquish the military direction

Terms of accommodation between him and Napoleon. July 1811.

CHAP. LXI. 1811. of the war, or the command of the provinces by his marshals; and they were still to correspond with Berthier, and take all their directions from the Tuileries. Napoleon also strongly counselled the convocation of a Cortes at Madrid to consider the state of the nation, and form a set-off against that assembled in the Island of Leon, which he characterised as "a miserable canaille of obscure agitators." With these promises and injunctions Joseph was for the time pacified; and he returned to Madrid in July, where his situation appeared for a while to be improved by the successes of Marshal Suchet in the east of Spain. But the promised remittances from Paris were never regularly made; the former disputes with the marshals about the contributions revived; the project of the Cortes was adjourned from Wellington's successes in the next campaign; and, in less than two years, nothing remained of Joseph's government but the recollection of the oppression of which he was the impotent spectator, and the privations of which he had been the real victim.[1]

June 1811.

July 14.

[1] Nap. iv. 126, 127. Papers taken at Vittoria. Ibid. iv. 533, 541. App.

Prosperous condition of the French at this period in Spain.

While the Governments of France and Spain were thus arranging between themselves the proportions in which they were to share between each other the spoils of the Peninsula, and Napoleon was securing the lion's share to himself, a lingering but unconquerable resistance was still presented in the few strongholds which remained in the hands of the patriots. It was in a very few quarters, however, that the contest was continued: the greater part of the country was subdued; its resources were almost all at the conqueror's disposal; and, in a military point of view, the conquest might be considered as complete. Both the Castiles, with the capital, were in the victor's power: Andalusia and Grenada, with their rich and

hitherto untouched fields of plunder, were at his disposal; and the whole northern provinces, including the passes of the Pyrenees, the whole of Aragon, and the greater part of Catalonia, were strongly garrisoned by his troops. The recent successes in the latter province, particularly the fall of Gerona, Hostalrich, Lerida, and Mequinenza, had both opened to the French arms the road from Perpignan to Barcelona, and established them in a solid manner on the Ebro; and nothing was wanting but the conquest of Tortosa and Taragona to enable Suchet to carry his victorious arms into Valencia, and subject the whole eastern provinces to the Emperor's sway. On the other side, they were still excluded from the kingdom of Portugal, and a disastrous campaign had followed the invasion of that country; but the English armies appeared in no sufficient strength to disturb them beyond the Spanish frontier; and the possession of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz promised to secure the Castiles against any serious incursion from their ancient antagonists in that quarter. Great as the extent of territory occupied by the French generals was, the forces at their disposal were fully equal to their command. Seventy-five thousand men in Andalusia, under the command of Soult, maintained the blockade of Cadiz, retained the whole provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena in subjection, and watched over the security of Badajoz, on the Portuguese frontier: fifty thousand were still ready in Leon to assemble round the standard of Marmont, who had succeeded Massena in the command of the army of Portugal; while sixty thousand more, under Bessieres, at Valladolid, Biscay, and Leon, watched the Spanish force at the entrance of the Galician defiles, and secured the important line of communication by Vittoria to Bay-

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

onne; while in the eastern provinces, Macdonald, with forty-five thousand men, lay at Gerona and Hostalrich, guarding the important entrance by Perpignan into Catalonia: Suchet, after providing for all his fortresses, could still bring thirty thousand excellent troops into the field for active operation, besides leaving twenty thousand in the garrisons of his government; and twenty thousand more under Joseph and Jourdan at Madrid, and fifteen thousand under Regnier, in Estremadura and La Mancha, overawed the capital, and maintained the communication between the different parts of this immense military establishment.[1]*

[1] Imperial Muster Rolls. April 1811. Napier, iii. 570, 571, and iv. 51, Belm. i. 185.

Forces assembled in Cadiz by the Allies.

The vital point of resistance to all this stupendous array, was to be found within the walls of Cadiz; but, though the force there was nearly twenty thousand strong, yet it was composed of such various nations, and in great part so disorganized and depressed, that little reliance could be placed on it, even for the defence of that last stronghold of Spanish independence. Five thousand English and Portuguese, who arrived immediately after the French troops appeared before its walls in February 1810, from Lisbon and Gibraltar, under General Stewart, were excellent soldiers; but the remaining fourteen thousand, composed of the refugees from Seville, and the gallant men who had come up under Albuquerque,† were in the most miserable state, without shoes, pay, or clothing, and hardly any remaining ammunition. The regency was without vigour or consideration; the public stores were shamefully dilapidated by private cupidity; and such was the general despondence and confusion which prevailed,

* See note A, Appendix.

† *Ante*, vii. 829.

CHAP. LXI.

1810.

that if Victor's troops had immediately, on their arrival at the bay, pushed on and attacked the defences on the isthmus which connected the city with the mainland, they in all probability would have carried it, and, but for the arrival of the English troops, certainly would have done so. As it was, the exterior forts on the mainland side of the bay were abandoned and dismantled in the general consternation; and from Fort Matagorda, the most advanced and important outwork on their side, the French bombs could reach the upper harbour and a considerable part of the city.[1]

[1] Thib. viii. 259, 260, and Napier, iii. 173, 174. Belm. i. 184. Tor. iii. 196, 197.

Spanish and British forces in the Peninsula.

In the other quarters of Spain, appearances were, if possible, still more unpromising. Twenty-five thousand men, indeed, in Valencia, and twelve thousand in Murcia, still hoisted the colours of independence; but their composition, equipment, and discipline were so wretched, that military discernment could already anticipate, what the event soon proved, that no reliance was to be placed on them in the field, and but little in the defence of fortified places. In Catalonia, though a desultory warfare was still kept up in the mountains, no force existed capable of keeping the field in the level country; and the campaign was in reality reduced to the sieges of Tortosa and Taragona, the last important strongholds which the Spaniards possessed in that province; while in Galicia, the new levies, nearly fifteen thousand strong, were unable, from their want of discipline, to emerge from their mountain defiles; and the guerilla parties in the central provinces, though exceedingly harassing to the enemy's communications, were detached from each other, and altogether inefficient as a force in regular warfare. Thus eighty or ninety thousand men, for the most part ill-disciplined, and

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

worse equipped, shut up in fortified places along the sea-coast, and altogether detached from each other, were all that remained of the Spanish forces to contend with above three hundred thousand French soldiers, admirably equipped, under the guidance of veteran generals, masters of all the entrances into and main roads through the country, in possession of its principal strongholds, and the whole interior lines of communication through its provinces. In these circumstances, it required not the gift of prescience to foresee that the weight of the contest would fall on the English and Portuguese army; and that unless Wellington, with his fifty thousand disciplined soldiers, could strike a decisive blow at the heart of the enemy's power, the cause of the Peninsula, and with it the hope of European independence, was lost.[1]

[1] Belm. i. 185, 186. Vict. et Conq. xx. 8, 10. Nap. iii. 178, 1780. Thib. viii. 259, 260.

Description of Cadiz.

CADIZ, the keystone of the brave but disjointed arch of resistance which still encircled Spain, was a city, the natural strength of which had, from the most remote ages, rendered it an important object in the Peninsular wars. The Gaditane Isle, or Isle of Leon, indeed, is by nature so strong as to require but little assistance from art to become altogether impregnable. It consists of an island, three leagues long, and one and three quarters broad, in the form of an irregular triangle, situated in the sea, at the mouth of the Guadaleta river; and separated from the adjacent continent by the Santa Petri channel, an arm of the sea nine miles long, about three hundred yards wide, and of depth sufficient to float a seventy-four, which receives the waters of all the streams that descend from the heights on the mainland, and is bounded on the continent by salt marshes

of still greater breadth. The great road from Cadiz to Seville crosses this channel and marsh by the bridge of Zuazo, which on the approach of the French was broken down, and which was defended by powerful batteries on either side. The arsenal Caraccas stands on the extremity of the Isle of Leon, nearest to the bridge and mainland, but from the breadth of the marsh it could not be reached save by water or bombardment; and, on the other side of the bridge, the castle of Santa Petri commanded all the opposite shore and approaches to the marsh. The whole Isle of Leon is composed of a salt marsh, with the exception of the ridge on which the town of Isla, containing eighteen thousand inhabitants, is placed, and the Sandhills at the opposite extremity, running out into the sea, on which Cadiz is built, which in general numbers eighty, but was then encumbered by a hundred and fifty thousand souls. The great road by the bridge of Zuazo, which runs through the town of Isla, is elevated on, and runs for two leagues along a narrow isthmus, between the Atlantic on the one side, and the inner salt marsh of the island on the other; and it is cut in various places by ditches, and intersected by redoubts, which, presenting successive points of defence, rendered attack from without extremely difficult, even if the bridge of Zuazo and town of Isla had been carried. At the close of all, Cadiz itself, situated at the extremity of the isthmus, arose, strongly fortified on that side; the neck of land which approached it was exposed to the concentric fire of numerous and formidable batteries; and an advancing enemy would be exposed to a flanking fire from the vessels of war on the one side, and gun-boats on the other. Nearly two thousand guns in all were mounted on the im-

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

mense circuit of the works; but many of them were unskilfully constructed, and not less than thirty thousand men were requisite to provide them with proper garrisons. The promontory of the mainland which approaches nearest to the city, was armed by two strong forts, called the Trocadero and Matagorda; but even if they were carried by the besiegers, the immense batteries of the Puntales stood directly opposite, on the other side of the channel, at the distance only of twelve hundred yards; while the nearest parts of Cadiz itself were still four thousand yards, or nearly two miles and a half, from the most advanced point to which the besiegers' batteries could be pushed.[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 195, 197. Nap. iii. 173, 175. Hard. xi. 144. Vict. et Conq. xx. 10, 11.

Arrival of the British troops, and first measures of defence.

General Stewart arrived at Cadiz with 2000 British troops from Gibraltar on the 11th February, and in a few days 2000 more English and Portuguese were received from Lisbon, who were welcomed with loud acclamations by the inhabitants; impending danger having completely extinguished the hitherto inveterate jealousy entertained by the Spaniards of foreign interference. They found the people zealously engaged in exertions to repair and strengthen the fortifications; and multitudes, in particular, labouring day and night in cutting a deep ditch across the chaussée, on the isthmus leading to Cadiz, in the narrowest part—so as to bring both seas to its foot—and constructing strong walls of masonry and batteries on either side. Their efforts, however, though stimulated by all the ardour of patriotic enthusiasm, were ill directed; confusion and dilapidation pervaded every part of the public administration; and such was the ignorance of the Spanish engineers of the plainest principles of the military art, that while they had abandoned the

strongholds of the Trocadero and Matagorda, from whence the enemy's shells could reach the city, they had pushed their advanced posts on the road to Seville, a mile and a half beyond the Zuazo bridge;[1] that is, into a situation where they were exposed to attack on either flank, and where defeat would endanger the bridge itself, and the whole extensive defences of the Isle of Leon.[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 196, 197. Nap. 177, 179. Thib. viii. 262, 263.

Feb. 22. Noble defence of Matagorda by the British.

The first care of General Stewart after his arrival was to regain Fort Matagorda, where batteries were already constructing to bombard Cadiz. This important service was successfully performed by Captain M'Lean, at the head of 150 seamen and marines. Its dismantled works were hastily restored, and guns planted on the ramparts, which not only silenced the field-pieces of the enemy directed against them, but severely galled their advancing works on the Trocadero Point. The whole efforts of the French were therefore directed to regain possession of this fort on the mainland; and with such vigour were their operations conducted, and such resources for a siege did they find in the arsenal of Seville, that, in a few weeks, they had fifty pieces of heavy cannon placed in battery against its walls; while a Spanish seventy-four and armed flotilla, which had hitherto co-operated in the defence, were obliged, by a tempest of red-hot shot, to slip their cables and move across to Cadiz. The feeble rampart soon gave way before this tremendous weight of metal; but though the walls were ruined, and the enemy's balls flew so thick that a flag-staff bearing the Spanish colours was broken six times in an hour, and at last they could only be kept flying by being nailed to the corner of the rampart, yet the heroic little garrison, with their dauntless com-

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

mander, Captain M'Lean, still maintained their ground, and from the midst of the ruins kept up an unquenchable fire on the besiegers. For six-and-thirty hours this marvellous resistance was prolonged, till at length General Graham, who had succeeded to the command of the British troops in the Isle, seeing that half of that band were killed or wounded, withdrew them in boats to the opposite side, and the bastions after being blown up were abandoned to the enemy.[1] *

[1] Nap. iii. 180, 181. Thib. viii. 264.

Increased means of defence accumulated in Cadiz.

The brave resistance of this little band of heroes proved the salvation of Cadiz, and eventually exercised a material influence on that of the civilized world. For fifty-five days they had held the post on the enemy's side, and in the midst of his batteries; and by simply maintaining it they had prevented any attack being made in other quarters. During this important interval the panic had subsided in Cadiz; the British troops had been augmented to 8000 men by reinforcements from Lisbon and Gibraltar; six millions of dollars, recently arrived from Mexico, had replenished the public treasury; heavy taxes on houses within, and imports into, Cadiz furnished a small permanent revenue; the Spanish garrison was considerably augmented by volunteer battalions raised in the city, and numerous detachments brought by sea from different points in the coast; the whole ships of war had been brought

* A memorable instance of female heroism occurred at this siege. A sergeant's wife named Retson was in a casement with the wounded men, when a drummer-boy was ordered to fetch water from the well of the fort. On going out the boy faltered under the severity of the fire, upon which she took the vessel from him; and although a shot cut the bucket cord when in her hand, she braved the terrible cannonade, and brought the water in safety to the wounded men.—*Napier*, iii. 181; and *Sketch of a Soldier's Life in Ireland*, 72.

round from Ferrol; and thirty thousand men in arms within the walls, supported by a fleet of twenty-three ships of the line, of which four were British, and twelve frigates, were in a condition not only to defy any attack, but to menace the enemy in the lines which they were constructing round the bay. Victor, who was at the head of the blockading force, had not above 20,000 men under his command, so widely had the vast French force which burst into Andalusia been dispersed to compel obedience and levy contributions over its wide extended territory. Despairing, therefore, of carrying the place by open force, he resolved to turn the siege into a blockade; and, for this purpose, vast intrenchments were constructed round the bay, at the distance of a league and a half beyond the exterior defences of the Isle of Leon, on which the French army laboured for two years, and which, equally with those defences themselves, remain a monument for the admiration of future ages.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 419. Tor. iii. 199, 201. Thib. viii. 265. Nap. iii. 182, 183.

These gigantic lines of circumvallation, setting out from Rota, a village on the coast, on the north of the bay of Cadiz, passed through the towns of St Maria and Puerto Real on the sea-shore, ascended the semicircular range of hills which forms the eastern boundary of the great salt marsh, and after passing through Chiclana, regained the sea at the Tower of Barmeja, three leagues to the south of Cadiz. Thus they formed an immense semicircle, ten leagues in length, resting at each extremity on the sea, and embracing within its ample circuit the Isle of Leon, lying in the centre of the bay, and separated at every point from the besiegers there by an intervening arm of the ocean and vast salt marsh, in general a league across. On these works, upwards of three

Description of the French lines round Cadiz.

CHAP. LXI. 1810. hundred pieces of cannon, drawn from the arsenal of Seville, were, before the end of the year 1810, planted by the French engineers; the forts of Matagorda and Trocadero, the advanced posts of their lines, were greatly strengthened, and armed with powerful batteries, while mortars of a prodigious size were cast at Toulon, and sent by sea, by Malaga, to Cadiz, in order to annoy the shipping in the bay or the city.

May 1810. Other advantages, however, accrued to the French from this position: fifteen hundred prisoners, on board two hulks at Cadiz, who had been detained there since the battle of Bayleu, cut their cables, drifted during a heavy gale to the French side of the bay, and rejoined their comrades, notwithstanding all the fire of the Spanish batteries, after a deplorable captivity of two years; and General Lacy, who was embarked with three thousand men to aid the peasants of the Sierra de Ronda, who had taken up arms to resist the French spoliating columns, was, after some successes, surrounded by their forces in every direction, cut off from Gibraltar, and compelled, after sustaining severe loss, to re-embark at Estipona for Cadiz.[1]

June 18. [1] Nap. iii. 182, 184. Thib. viii. 264, 265. Jom. iii. 419, 421. Tor. iii. 301, 302.

Positions of the French armies in Andalusia and Grenada.

But it was soon found that the damage which could be effected in this way was very inconsiderable; and although Soult was indefatigable in his efforts, it was very apparent that he had slight hope of reducing the place by force of arms, and that, under the pretext of maintaining the blockade of the fortress, his real object was to construct a barrier which might prevent the garrison from issuing forth, and the English from rekindling, from that basis, the flames of war in the Andalusian provinces. Victor, accordingly, was left in the works with a force never exceeding twenty thousand men, wholly inadequate

to undertake active operations against the Isle of Leon, and barely sufficient to guard the immense circuit of the lines; Soult and Sebastiani established themselves with powerful garrisons at Seville and Grenada, where they strove, by a profuse expenditure and sumptuous entertainments, to render the French sway popular in the provinces of which they were the capitals; Mortier lay in the neighbourhood of the Sierra Morena, and observed the great road to Badajoz; while detached columns traversed the country in all directions, repressing the guerilla chiefs, levying contributions to defray the heavy expenses of the generals, and plundering the paintings which now form the unrivalled collection of the works of the Spanish masters in Marshal Soult's hotel at Paris. Though the forces at the disposal of the French generals were altogether irresistible in the field, and gave them the entire command of the open country, yet the Spaniards in the mountains were still unsubdued: Romana and Ballasteros in the Sierra Morena, to the south of Estremadura; Blake and Elio on the confines of Murcia; and numerous bodies of armed peasants in the mountains of Ronda, still maintained a desultory resistance, cut off the French detachments when they ventured too near their fastnesses, and preserved afloat the standard of independence, which might again be unfurled if happier days should dawn upon their country. To such a degree were the French irritated and annoyed by this harassing warfare, that Soult, on the 9th May, issued a proclamation, declaring "the army of King Joseph the only regular Spanish force, and the whole patriot bands as armed banditti, to whom no quarter should be given;" and this enactment was carried into effect by the burning of several villages, and execution

May 9.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

of their inhabitants, who had taken part in the insurrection. The regency for some time made no reprisals; but the exterminating system being continued, they at length issued a decree, declaring that for every Spaniard thus murdered three Frenchmen should be put to death; and this resolution having in some instances been acted upon, a stop was at length put, at least in the south, to this inhuman species of hostility.[1]

1 Jom. iii. 421, 422. Tor. iii. 236, 246. Nap. iii. 188, 196. Thib. viii. 266, 267.

Operations in Catalonia. Preparations for the siege of Tortosa.

While a noble constancy amidst misfortunes was thus exhibited within the ramparts of Cadiz, and the standard of independence floated only in the south of the Peninsula in inaccessible deserts, or on the summit of the mountains, Suchet was commencing that energetic and skilful campaign which proved so fatal to the Spaniards on the east of Spain. It has been already noticed with what ability he had effected the reduction of Lerida and Mequinenza, and how much his successes were paralysed, by the disasters of Augereau, in the northern parts of the province.* Napoleon was so highly gratified by these successes, and mortified by the simultaneous reverses, that he resolved to intrust his successful lieutenant with the important mission of completing the reduction of the province, and to deprive the unsuccessful one of his command. Augereau accordingly was recalled, and Macdonald, restored to favour by his glorious exploit at the battle of Wagram,† appointed to the direction of the northern parts of the province. Two great roads alone existed at that period in Catalonia, the one from Barcelona to Saragossa, the other by the sea-coast from Perpignan, by Gerona, Barcelona, Taragona, Tortosa, and Peniscola, to Valencia. Of the first road the French, since the fall of Lerida,

* *Ante*, vii. 833, 837. † *Ante*, vii. 497.

were entirely masters; but the second was in their power only as far as Barcelona. Napoleon directed his lieutenants to proceed immediately to the reduction of the remaining strongholds on this line, the success of which would at once give him the command of the great communication along the east coast of Spain, and deprive the enemy of the succours which they were constantly deriving from the English vessels. Macdonald was to command the covering force, while to Suchet was given the immediate direction of the attacking army.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 444, 445. Nap. iv. 7, 9. Tor. iii. 312, 315.

Forces and dispositions of the Spaniards in Catalonia.

But although active operations were thus resolved on in the eastern provinces, and the two French marshals, after leaving a sufficient number in garrison, could bring nearly sixty thousand excellent troops into the field; yet it was no easy task which awaited them in executing the commands of the Emperor. The Spaniards in Catalonia, under O'Donnell and Campoverde, were above twenty thousand strong, and this force was capable of being increased to double the amount for a particular enterprise, by the concourse of the peasants, all of whom were armed, and to whom dire necessity had taught the art of quitting their houses, and taking refuge in the hills on the approach of the enemy. The upper valleys in Aragon and Catalonia were entirely in the hands of the Spaniards; and, descending from their mountain fastnesses, where, from the absence of roads, pursuit was hardly practicable, they alike straitened Suchet's quarters in the former province, and threatened Macdonald's communication with Barcelona in the latter. Though the road from Gerona to that capital was only forty miles long, it was highly dangerous from the number of narrow defiles with which it abounded, and the many rivers it had to cross;

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

and so formidable were the armed bands who hung upon its flank, that the re-victualling of the fortress, which was kept in a constant state of blockade by the patriots, required a covering force of 8000 or 10,000 men. To add to the difficulties of the French generals, the battering train for the reduction of Taragona was preparing at Toulon, and required to come from France. Transport by sea was impossible, from the vigilance of the British cruisers; and not only was their conveyance by land along the sea-coast both difficult and dangerous, from the vicinity of so many valleys issuing upon it swarming with armed men; but, even if these were successfully passed, the ridge of mountains which separated the neighbourhood of Barcelona from Tortosa and the valley of the Ebro, was in the hands of the Somatenes, and its principal passes, the Col de Balaguer and the Col del Alba, were strongly guarded by detachments of regular troops; while the neighbouring fortress of Taragona, which the Spaniards had materially strengthened, and from whence ample supplies by sea could be obtained, operated as an advantageous base for their defensive operations.[1]

[1] Tor. iii. 312, 313. Nap. iv. 10, 12. Suchet, i. 173, 176. Vict. et Conq. xx. 53, 54.

Macdonald's first operations in Catalonia. May 15.

When Macdonald succeeded Augereau in the command of the army in northern Catalonia, he found the troops in a state of frightful insubordination, carrying on war in a most inhuman manner, and inflicting on and receiving from the unhappy peasants every species of atrocity; the sad bequests of the cruelty and violence of his predecessor. His first care was, by the establishment of discipline, to endeavour to bring them back to more humane habits, and greater regularity of conduct; but the injuries given and received on each side were too recent—the mutual exasperation too violent, to en-

able him to restore the contest to the usages of civil- CHAP. LXI.
ized war. It was still a matter of extermination, 1810.
and conducted on both sides with the utmost exas-
peration. Having in some degree, however, by a
wholesome severity, restored the discipline of his
own troops, he undertook, in the middle of June, the
re-victualling of Barcelona, which was hard pressed June 10.
for provisions: and though, by the aid of a covering
force of ten thousand men, he succeeded in his object,
yet such were the delays occasioned to his move-
ments by the incessant attacks of the Somatenes,
that his provisions were nearly half exhausted when
he reached that city; and he himself was obliged to
return with his empty carts the very next day to
the neighbourhood of Gerona. In July he collected July 16.
another convoy to relieve the again famished city:
forced the Garriga pass on the 18th, and entered Aug. 8.
Barcelona that night. Early in August he again
set out with a third convoy, which he also delivered
in safety in that fortress; and, finding that the
northern parts of the province were entirely ex-
hausted by these repeated requisitions, he now moved
to the southward, forced the pass of Ordal with six-
teen thousand men, and established himself for a
few days at Reuss, in the middle of a little plain
near Taragona, while Campoverde, with the main Aug. 16.
body of the Spanish forces, withdrew under the can-
non of that fortress. Finding, however, that the
resources of Reuss and its vicinity were soon ex-
hausted, and that the Spanish irregulars were draw-
ing round him in all directions, and straitening his
foraging parties, he again broke up; and, after making
a feint towards the Col de Balaguer, turned sharp to
the left, and overthrowing all opposition penetrated
through the defile of Mont Blanch, and, descending

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

into the plain of Urgel, entered into communication with Suchet, who lay at Lerida, in that vicinity, busily engaged in preparations for the siege of Tortosa.[1]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 54, 55, and 136. Nap. iv. 19, 21. Belm. i. 150. Such. i. 195, 196. Vacani, 84, 92.

Brilliant success of O'Donnell in the north of Catalonia.

O'Donnell no sooner learned that Macdonald, with a considerable part of his forces, had crossed the mountains, and taken up his quarters in the neighbourhood of Lerida, than he formed the design of surprising some of the French troops which were left scattered in the Ampurdan and northern parts of Catalonia. This bold design he executed with a vigour, skill, and secrecy, worthy of the very highest admiration. Shrouding his plans in profound darkness, he set out with a chosen body of six thousand men, and proceeded by forced marches towards Upper

Sep. 6.

Catalonia. Leaving Barcelona and Hostalrich to the right, spreading contradictory reports wherever he went of his destination, proceeding by horse tracks only through the hills, and swelling his column as he advanced by the numerous bands of armed peasants on his road, he fell with an overwhelming

Sep, 14.

force on Schwartz's brigade, cantoned at La Bisbal, three quarters of a league from Gerona, totally defeated it, and made the whole, twelve hundred strong, prisoners. Bravely following up his success, he next surprised and captured the whole French detachments on the coast towards Palamos; and fifteen hundred prisoners were embarked at that harbour for Taragona, where they arrived in safety. The success, however, was dearly purchased by a severe wound which the brave O'Donnell received at Bisbal, which obliged him to return with part of his force by sea to Taragona, where he was received by the population in transports as a deliverer; but he left sufficient forces under Campoverde to nourish

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

the war in the Ampurdan, which soon became so formidable that it induced Napoleon to send strong reinforcements from Perpignan to Gerona, in the end of October, while thirty thousand fresh troops entered Navarre from France at the same period.[1]

[1] Nap. iv. 21, 24. Belm. i. 151. Tor. iii. 391, 392. Vacani, 96, 99.

Severely mortified by this disaster, which reflected as much discredit on the vigilance of his own officers as it did lustre on the skill and audacity of the enemy, Macdonald felt the necessity of retracing his steps to northern Catalonia; and while on his march there, sought to take his revenge by an attack on Cardona, where Campoverde had stationed himself with a considerable part of his forces, and where the local junta of Upper Catalonia had taken refuge when driven from Solsona, their usual place of assembly. In the attack on the latter town, the magnificent cathedral took fire, and burning all night, fell with a frightful crash that froze with horror every heart that heard it; while the mountains around were illuminated to their summits by the awful conflagration. Cardona itself stands at the foot of a rugged hill, which is the last of an offshoot from the great mountain range that divides eastern from western Catalonia, and a strong castle frowned on a mountain above. On the slope between the town and this stronghold the Spanish army was drawn up in an admirable position, and presented so formidable an aspect that Macdonald at first hesitated to attack it; but while he was deliberating, his advanced guard engaged without orders, and he was obliged to bring up his main body to its support. Neither, however, were able to make any impression; the French columns were driven back down the hill in disorder, and after losing some hundred men Macdonald drew off, and resumed his march to Ge-

Repulse of Macdonald at Cardona, and his retreat to Gerona.

Oct. 21.

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

rona, which he reached in the beginning of November. There, however, he found the country so utterly exhausted as to be incapable of furnishing subsistence to so great a number of troops; and as Barcelona was again reduced to extremity by want of provisions,* he left fourteen thousand men under Baraguay d'Hilliers in the Ampurdan to maintain the communication with France, himself set out with sixteen thousand more, and the convoy collected in Perpignan for its relief, and after some fighting succeeded in re-victualling the fortress a fourth time; and again moving to the southward, took a position near Mont Blanch, rather in the condition of a straitened and defeated than a victorious and relieving force.[1]

Nov. 27.

[1] Nap. iv. 25, 28 Tor. iii. 321, 322. Vict. et Conq. xx. 139, 141.

Suchet's exertions preparatory to the siege of Tortosa.

While Macdonald was thus painfully maintaining his ground in upper Catalonia, without the forty thousand men under his command making any progress in the subjugation or pacification of the country, Suchet was busily engaged in preparations for the siege of Tortosa. To effect this, however, was a very tedious and difficult undertaking, for the strength of the enemy's forces in the intervening country rendered the transport of the battering train from Gerona and the French frontier impossible; and

* Such was the extremity to which Barcelona was reduced at this period by the vigilant blockade kept up by the Catalonians on land, and the English at sea, that Macdonald on 28th October wrote to Suchet —"The Governor of Barcelona has announced to me the immediate departure of a convoy from Perpignan on 4th November, and urges me in the strongest manner to protect its advance. If that convoy is taken or dispersed, Barcelona will be lost: and it is not doubtful that the enemy will try every method to intercept it. My presence alone can save it; and you will easily understand, that even if the chances of success are equally balanced, we can never permit, without effort to avert it, such a loss, which would be irremediable."—MACDONALD *to* SUCHET, *28th October* 1810. SUCHET'S *Mem.*, i., 206.

it required to be collected in Aragon, and conveyed in boats down the Ebro to the destined points, where the banks were in great part in the enemy's hands. Macdonald's approach to the plain of Urgel rather increased than diminished his difficulties; for the unlooked for accumulation of force speedily exhausted the resources of the country, without affording any protection from the Somatenes to counterbalance that disadvantage. The financial difficulties of the French general were much augmented at this period by a peremptory order received from Napoleon to burn the whole English goods found in the province, an order which, however ill-timed and disastrous, he was obliged, after making the most vigorous remonstrances, to carry into complete execution, by publicly burning all the British manufactures found in the province, in the great square of Saragossa. British colonial produce, by great exertions, escaped with a duty only of fifty per cent. This rigorous measure entirely ruined the merchants of the province; and the only resources which the French general had at his command to encounter his enormous expenses, were those which he derived from the plain of Aragon, for great part of its mountain districts were in the hands of the guerillas; and Napoleon, following out his usual system of making war maintain war, had thrown him entirely on his own province for the whole expenses of his corps and military operations.* Such was the influence,

CHAP. LXI. 1810. Sept. 1810.

* "The Governor of Aragon, Marshal Suchet, is charged with the administration of the police, of public justice, and of the finances. He will nominate to all public employments, and make all the requisite regulations. All the revenues of Aragon, as well ordinary as extraordinary, shall be paid over to the French paymaster, for the payment of the troops, and the charges of their maintenance. As a consequence of this, from the 1st March 1810, the French Treasury shall cease to remit

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

however, of the vigorous government and able administration of Suchet, that under the protection of his power industry by degrees resumed its exertions; and though the taxes were extremely severe, comparative contentment prevailed; while such was the dexterity in extracting the resources from a country which long practice had given to the French generals and authorities, that from the ruined capital and wasted province of Aragon, they contrived to extort no less than eight millions of francs (£320,000) annually, for the pay of the troops alone, besides a much greater sum for their maintenance and operations,* although it had never paid four millions of francs in taxes in all to Government, in the most flourishing and pacific days of the Spanish monarchy.[1]

[1] Suchet, i. 280, 286, 306. Nap. iv. 30, 32. South. v. 257, 258. Belm. i. 151.

Commencement of the siege of Tortosa. Nov. 1810.

Although a sort of nominal blockade had been kept up of Tortosa since the middle of August, yet it was not till the beginning of November that the operations before it were seriously prosecuted; the waters of the Ebro being too shallow in the autumnal months, from the drought of summer, to permit the heavy boats laden with the siege equipage to drop down from Saragossa to the lower parts of the river. Meanwhile, the Spanish guerilla parties were indefatigable in their efforts to impede the progress of the navigation; several French parties despatched to clear the banks were surprised and cut to pieces; and, on one occasion, a whole Neapolitan battalion was made prisoners. Early in November, however, the waters had risen sufficiently to enable the flotilla

any funds for the service of the troops stationed in the whole extent of that Government."—*Decree, 8th Feb.* 1810—*Moniteur, 9th Feb.*—*and Suchet's Memoirs*, i. 365. This decree is a specimen and sample of the whole military government of Napoleon.

* In the six months preceding the siege of Tortosa, Suchet had levied in Aragon 120,000 sheep, and 1200 oxen.—*Suchet*, i. 313.

having the battering train and other siege apparatus, which had been so long in preparation, to drop down the stream; and though some of the boats were stranded, and severe fighting was necessary to clear the banks of the enemy, yet a sufficient number reached the neighbourhood of Tortosa, to enable Suchet to commence the siege. Macdonald, at the same time, approached from the north to lend a hand to the operations; and to facilitate their advance, Suchet attacked the Spanish troops at Falcet, who obstructed the communication between the two armies, and after a short conflict put them to the rout with considerable loss, while General Bassecour, who, with the Valencian troops, lay on the right bank of the Ebro, and who took advantage of the absence of the general-in-chief with the main body of the French forces on the left bank, to make an attack on the covering force near Uldecona, was defeated in two engagements, with the loss of three thousand men, and forced to take shelter within the walls of Peniscola. These important successes in a great measure secured the rear of the besieging force, and materially extended the district from which their resources were to be drawn; but such was the perseverance of the Spaniards, and the unconquerable spirit with which hostility sprung up in one place when extinguished in another, that the flotillas on the river were still exposed to attack, and a considerable convoy descending the stream was saved from destruction only by the sacrifice of the covering force, some hundred strong, ashore. Notwithstanding all their vigilance, however, the French generals were drawing their forces, as well as accumulating their means of prosecuting the siege, around the fortress. Suchet had twenty thousand men encamped under its walls; while Macdonald, having

1810. Nov. 19. Nov. 26.

CHAP. LXI. 1810.

re-victualled Barcelona, and raised its garrison to six thousand men, and left Baraguay D'Hilliers with fourteen thousand at Gerona, drew near with fifteen thousand excellent troops to cover the siege.[1]

[1] Nap. iv. 32, 35. Suchet, i. 217, 224. Tor. iii. 325, 327. Vict. et Conq. xx. 143, 144. Belm. iii. 415, 419.

TORTOSA, situated at the mouth of the Ebro, and in part resting on a ridge of rocky heights, which in that quarter approach close to the river, seems to form the bond of communication between the mountains of Catalonia and the waters of the river. The town itself is situated on the northern or left bank, and its chief defence consisted in the strong fortifications which crowned the crest of the rugged heights that rise from thence towards the mountains that lie to the northward. The communication with the opposite bank was by a bridge of boats, the southern extremity of which was covered by a regular *tête du pont*. The works on the left bank, running up broken ridges and across precipitous ravines, were extremely irregular, and formidable rather from the depth of the precipices and obstacles of the ground, than the strength of the battlements with which they were surmounted. A hornwork, called the Tenasas, perched on a height beyond the northern suburb, and a lunette, bearing the name of Orleans, constructed to cover the point where the Duke of Orleans had carried the place during the war of the Succession, constituted its principal outworks on the left bank of the river. The garrison consisted of eight thousand men; the inhabitants, ten thousand more, were animated with the best spirit; and both from the strength of the works, and the importance of its position, commanding the only bridge over the Ebro from Saragossa to the sea, this fortress was justly regarded as the key of all southern Catalonia.[1]

Description of Tortosa.

[1] Suchet, i. 225, 227. Nap. iv. 36, 38. Belm. iii. 419, 420.

Six thousand of Macdonald's men were placed

under the command of Suchet, while he himself with the remainder, 10,000 strong, stationed himself in the passes of the hills, in such a manner as to interrupt the approach of any Spaniards from Taragona, where the bulk of their forces were placed. But the defence made by Tortosa was noways commensurate either to its ancient reputation, nor the present efforts which had been made for its reduction. The investment having been completed, the whole enemy's posts were driven in on the 19th December; and on the following night ground was broken before the fortress. With such vigour were the operations conducted, and so negligent the defence, that in the short space of seven days the besiegers were safely lodged in the covered way, and on the following day a sally was repulsed with much slaughter. On the night of the 26th the batteries were armed with forty-five pieces of heavy artillery, from which at daybreak on the following morning a heavy fire was opened upon the Spanish ramparts. In two days the works were sensibly injured, the bridge to the southern bank of the river broken, and the *tête du pont* on that bank abandoned by the besieged. In the night of the 31st, the besiegers' guns were brought up to the edge of the counterscarp, and the miners had effected a lodgement in the rampart; but the mine was not yet fired, no practicable breach had been effected, and the garrison and armed citizens, still above 9000 strong, might have prolonged for a considerable time a glorious defence.[1]

Siege of Tortosa. Jan. 1, 1811.

Dec. 19.

Dec. 28.

[1] Tor. iv. 98, 101. Belm. iii. 434, 440. Suchet, i. 233, 246. Nap. iv. 42, 44.

The governor Alacha, however, was a weak man, wholly destitute of the resolution requisite for such a situation; his imagination was haunted by the terrors of a mine exploded, and the enemy rushing in through a defenceless breach; and at seven o'clock

Fall of the place. Jan. 2.

CHAP. LXI. 1811. in the evening he hoisted the white flag on the bastion chiefly threatened. Meanwhile, he had recourse to the usual resource of irresolute men, a council of war; but it decided nothing, and left him in greater perplexity than before. The officers, however, of the garrison, indignant at the pusillanimous surrender which was in contemplation, loudly remonstrated against the proposed surrender, and in fact almost shook Jan. 2. off the governor's authority. In the night, however, the artillery of the besiegers thundered with powerful effect on the ramparts from the opposite side of the ditch; in the morning two practicable breaches were made on it, and an immediate assault was commanded. Upon this three white flags were displayed in different parts of the city; and Suchet, perceiving that the governor's authority was not generally obeyed, rode up to the principal gate, informed the sentinels that hostilities had ceased, and desired to be instantly conducted to the governor in the citadel. He found him surrounded by his officers, who were vehemently protesting against a surrender, and contending for a renewal of hostilities; but such was the ascendant speedily obtained by the stern manner and undaunted bearing of the French general, that the governor was overawed; none of his officers could undertake the responsibility, at so awful a moment, of revolting openly against his authority, and the place was surrendered at discretion. The garrison, still 7000 strong, laid down their arms. There were found in the place 180 pieces of cannon, 30,000 bombs and cannon-balls, and 150,000 pounds of powder.[1]

[1] Belm. iii. 441, 443. Suchet, i. 245, 249. Nap. iv. 44, 45. Tor. iii. 99, 102.

Suchet took steps, without any delay, to improve the immense advantage thus gained to the uttermost. An expedition was immediately fitted out from the

fallen city against the Coldi Balaguer, a fort commanding the pass over the mountains of the same name between Tortosa and Taragona; and this important stronghold was carried by escalade. This easy conquest gave him the means of directing his forces at pleasure, either against the latter of these cities, the seat of government and great bulwark of the Spaniards in the province, or against the valleys still held by their arms in the north of Catalonia; while the possession of the only bridge over the Lower Ebro entirely severed the patriots in Catalonia from those in Valencia, and laid open the rich plains and hitherto untouched fields of the latter province to the French incursions. At the same time, the fort of La Rapita, on the sea-coast near the mouth of the Ebro, and the mouth of that river itself, fell into the hands of the French; and the Valencians and Catalonians, finding themselves entirely severed from each other, and separately menaced with an attack, gave up all thoughts of combined operations, and severally prepared to the best of their power to withstand the storm about to fall on their heads. Macdonald, however, in the course of his march from the neighbourhood of Barcelona to Lerida, whither he was directing his course in order to concert measures with Suchet for the investment of Taragona, had to sustain a rude conflict, in the defile of Valls, with the troops of Sarsfield, while the garrison of Taragona, under Campoverde, assailed his rear; the latter were defeated and driven back into the place; but the Italian division of Eugene was so severely handled by the former as to be at first defeated with severe loss, and only forced the passage by a sudden onset during the night, when the pass was at last cleared, and Macdonald succeeded in reaching Lerida.

Important consequences of the fall of Tortosa.

Jan. 9.

Jan. 13. 1811.

Jan. 15.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

Notwithstanding this success, the cause of the Peninsula could not have received a severer blow than by the unlooked-for and discreditable fall of the important fortress of Tortosa; and to it may immediately be ascribed the long train of disasters which ensued in the east of Spain; and which, if not counterbalanced by the extraordinary successes simultaneously gained by the English in the west, would have permanently riveted the fetters of French despotism around the neck of the Spanish nation.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 448. Nap. iv. 45. Suchet, i. 253, 254. Tor. iv. 108. Vict. et Conq. xx. 297, 300.

Preparations for the siege of Taragona.

After the fall of Tortosa, Suchet was engaged for several months in preparations for the most arduous undertaking which now remained in the Peninsula—the siege of TARAGONA, the strongest fortress still in the hands of the Spaniards—the seat of government—the arsenal of their power, and in an especial manner valuable from its capacious harbour, which afforded ample means of communicating by sea with the English fleet. The city, however, was so powerful, that great preparations and no small concentration of force were required for its reduction. In order to prepare for it, Suchet returned to Saragossa, where he devoted himself for some months to the internal concerns of his province, and the collecting provisions for his army; while General Guilleminot, chief of the staff to Macdonald, joined him in that city, to arrange joint measures for the important enterprise. So inadequate, however, did all the means which they possessed appear, that Guilleminot was dispatched to Paris in the name of both generals to solicit succours, and the means of pushing the siege with vigour. Napoleon, however, who by this time was actively engaged in preparations for the Russian war, informed them that they must not look to him for assistance, and that they had ample means

March 18, 1811.

at their disposal to effect their object; but he directed that the army of Aragon should form the besieging, and that of Catalonia the covering force; that the siege equipage and artillery should be drawn from the ramparts of Lerida and Tortosa; and that Suchet's force, which was much weakened by its active operations, should be reinforced by two divisions of the army of Macdonald, numbering 17,000 men. Notwithstanding this copious draft, the hero of Wagram had still nearly 30,000 men under his banners, of whom, however, only one-half could be spared from the garrison of the Ampurdan, and the arduous duty of keeping open the communication between Barcelona and France.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 516, 517. Nap. iii. 46, 51. Suchet, ii. 308, 319.

Renewed vigour of the Catalonians in the war.

The war in Catalonia during the whole Peninsular contest was of a very peculiar kind, and more nearly resembled the varied adventures and balanced successes of the wars of the League in France, or of the Succession in Spain, than the fierce and irresistible onsets which characterised in other quarters the wars of the French Revolution. Exhaustion and lassitude followed every considerable achievement; and the enemy never appeared so formidable as after reverses that presaged his ruin. This was the natural consequence of the strong country which the Spaniards occupied, of the tenacious spirit with which they were animated, and of the parsimonious policy of Napoleon, which denied to his generals in every province every pecuniary assistance excepting such as they could derive from the province itself. A striking example of this peculiarity in the contest, occurred immediately after the fall of Tortosa. While all Europe imagined that so decisive a blow was to terminate the war in the east of the Peninsula, and that Catalonia and Valencia, now severed

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

from each other, would separately fall an easy prey to the victor, the gallant Spaniards of the former province, nothing daunted, were preparing to wrest its most important fortresses from the enemy; and, though baffled in one of their enterprises, they succeeded in making themselves masters of the key to the eastern Pyrenees.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 517. Nap. iii. 48, 49.

Attempt to surprise Barcelona, and capture of Figueras by the Spaniards. March 29.

Barcelona was the first object of their attack. Early in March Campoverde assembled 8000 men at Molinos del Rey, and 7000 at Igualada and the neighbouring villages; and having secret intelligence with the inhabitants of Monjuich, the citadel of that fortress, who promised to aid him in the attempt, he deemed himself secure of success. Late on the night of the 29th March, he arrived close to the walls, and a column of grenadiers descended into the ditch. General Maurice Mathieu, the French governor, however, had accurate intelligence of all that was going forward: the ramparts were lined with armed men; and so terrible a fire was speedily opened on the head of the column, that great numbers fell on the spot, and the remainder who had not crossed the crest of the glacis, finding the design discovered, retired hastily and abandoned the attempt. Far from being discouraged by this failure, a similar enterprise was shortly after undertaken against Figueras, and crowned with complete success. A leader of the Miquelets named Martinez having ascertained that the governor of this important fortress kept a very negligent look-out, and that the garrison, not 2000 strong, trusted entirely to the strength of the ramparts for their defence, formed the design, with the aid of some citizens in the town, of surprising the gates. Late on the evening

April 10.

of the 9th April, he descended from the mountains,

and as soon as it was dark sent his advanced guard under Rovira, seven hundred strong, close to the ramparts. The citizens inside, with whom the plan was concerted, immediately opened the postern; the Spaniards rushed in and disarmed the guard; and so rapidly did Martinez, with the main body of his forces, follow on their footsteps, that, before the astonished Italians could make any preparations for their defence, the gates were all in possession of the enemy, the arsenals taken, and the whole garrison made prisoners. Thirty men only were killed or wounded in this brilliant exploit; the governor and 1700 men were taken; a few hundred made their escape to Gerona, where they arrived in great dismay early in the morning; while the Somatenes of the neighbouring hills, among whom the news spread like wild-fire, made the most incredible exertions, before the French could reinvest the place, to throw in supplies of men and provisions.[1]

[1] Tor. iv. 118, 119. Nap. iv. 60, 62. Vict. et Conq. xx. 304, 308.

Unsuccessful attempt of Campoverde to relieve the place.

This important advantage, which seemed to counterbalance the fall of Tortosa, and, if it had been adequately supported, unquestionably would have done so, excited the most enthusiastic transports throughout all Spain. Crowds of Miquelets fully equipped, and burning with ardour, crowded round the standards of Campoverde and Sarsfield; and from all quarters bands of armed men converged towards Figueras to raise the blockade, revictual the fortress, and preserve the eastern key of the Peninsula for the arms of the monarchy. *Te Deum* was sung in all the churches of the Peninsula not under the immediate control of the enemy. The general transports knew no bounds. But while the people were giving themselves to excusable congratulations on this auspicious event, the French

CHAP. LXI.

1811. generals were busily engaged in taking measures to render it of no avail to the enemy. Baraguay d' Hillier's immediately drew out all the forces he could collect from Gerona and the neighbouring forts, and closely blockaded the fortress, in the hope of compelling it to surrender, from want of provisions, before any succours could be thrown in by the enemy. The Spaniards, on their part, were not idle; and Campoverde speedily approached from the side of Taragona, at the head of 8000 infantry and 1200 horse, bringing with them a great convoy of ammunition and provisions. But all his efforts to relieve

May 3. the place proved unsuccessful. Early in May he made his appearance before the besiegers' stations, and so completely had the design been concealed from the French generals, that, at the point where the heads of his columns appeared, there was only a single battalion ready for action, while the Baron d'Erolles threatened the besiegers on the other side by a sally from the citadel; and if the Spanish commander had instantly commenced the attack, the French historians admit he would easily have accomplished his object. The French general, in this extremity, had recourse to an artifice, and announced the conclusion of an armistice with a view to a capitulation to Sarsfield, who fell into the snare, and consented at the critical moment to a suspension of arms. Meanwhile, urgent messengers were dispatched for succour, and when hostilities were resumed the period for complete success had passed. As it was, the head of Sarsfield's column, after overthrowing all opposition, penetrated into the town, and 1500 men with some provisions succeeded in reinforcing the garrison; but Baraguay d'Hilliers, alarmed by the fire of musketry, and now

aware of the real point of attack, hastened with a choice body of 4000 men to the spot, and assailing the Spaniards while scattered over several miles of road, and in part involved in the streets of the suburbs in flank, won an easy victory; 1100 men were lost to the Spaniards in this affair, and the remainder driven to a distance from the beleaguered fortress; and though the French loss was nearly as great, yet they might with reason congratulate themselves on the success of their defence, as the provisions thrown into the place bore no proportion to the additional mouths introduced; and after the defeat of Sarsfield the blockading columns quietly resumed their stations on the hills around its walls. [1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 308, 311. Tor. iv. 121, 123. Nap. iv. 62, 63.

Macdonald was engaged during these operations in northern Catalonia in an enterprise which has left an enduring stain on his memory. After the departure of Suchet for Saragossa, consequent on the fall of Tortosa, the marshal had set out from Lerida for Barcelona, not by the direct road of Igualada, which was occupied in force by Sarsfield, but by the circuitous route of Manresa. Sarsfield, apprized of his intentions, lay in the rocky heights in the neighbourhood of Mont Serrat to assail him in the march. The Italians, who formed the head of the column, encountered a severe opposition at the bridge of Manresa, which was strongly barricaded; but having forced their way through, they, with wanton barbarity, set fire to the town, though it had made no resistance, and was almost entirely deserted by its inhabitants, and even tore the wounded Spaniards from the hospital. The flames spreading with frightful rapidity, soon reduced 700 houses to ashes, among which were two orphan

Burning and fight of Manresa. March 29

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

hospitals, and several other noble establishments both of industry and beneficence. Macdonald, who witnessed the conflagration from the heights of Culla, at a short distance, made no attempt to extinguish the flames; but, resuming his march on the following morning, left the smoking ruins to attest where a French marshal's army had passed the night. But the wanton act of barbarity was quickly and condignly avenged. The inhabitants of all the neighbouring hills, struck by the prodigious light which, through the whole night, illuminated the heavens, hastened at daybreak to the scene of devastation, and, wrought up to the highest pitch by the sight of the burning dwellings, fell with irresistible fury on the French rearguard as it was defiling out of the town, while Sarsfield himself assailed the long column of march in flank, when scattered over several leagues of woody and rocky defiles, and before Macdonald reached Barcelona he had sustained a loss of 1000 men. The hideous cruelty of this conflagration excited the utmost indignation, not only in Catalonia, but throughout the whole of Spain. The war assumed a character of vengeful atrocity, hitherto unequalled even in that sea of blood; and the Spanish generals, justly indignant at such a wanton violation alike of the usages of war, and the convention hitherto observed in Catalonia, issued a proclamation directing no quarter to be given to the French troops in the neighbourhood of any town which should be delivered over to the flames.*[1]

[1] Tor. iv. 115, 116. Vict. et Conq. xx. 304, 307. Nap. iv. 56, 57. South. v. 260, 261.

* "The conduct of Marshal Macdonald has been equally unworthy of his rank as a French duke and marshal, and his station as a general of civilized armies. Not content with reducing to ashes a defenceless city, which was making no resistance, he has not even respected the asylum of wounded soldiers, and has violated the sacred contract concluded between the hostile armies, and acted upon since the commencement

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

Macdonald was so disconcerted by this disaster, and the fall of Figueras, which in the highest degree excited the displeasure of the Emperor, that he earnestly entreated Suchet to lay aside for the present all thoughts of the siege of Taragona, and unite all his disposable forces with those of the army of northern Catalonia, for the great object of regaining the most important fortress in eastern Spain for the French arms. But Suchet, who was intent on the reduction of the great stronghold of the patriots in that quarter, was not to be diverted from his object; and since Macdonald professed his inability to render him any assistance, he resolved to undertake the enterprise alone, with the aid only of Macdonald's divisions which were placed under his orders. He replied, therefore, to the requisition of his colleague for aid in the blockade of Figueras, "That a simple blockade might be established by the nearest troops; while to accumulate great forces on so sterile a spot would, without accelerating the surrender, transfer the difficulties of subsistence to the besieging force; that it was by no means reasonable to renounce the attack on Taragona, the only remaining bulwark of Catalonia, at the very moment of execution, because of the loss of a fort; that it was in Taragona that the greatest number of the Spanish forces in the province were shut up, and it was there only that they could be made prisoners. Eighteen thousand had already been captured in Lerida, Mequinenza, and Tortosa, and if ten or twelve thousand more were taken in Taragona, the strength of Catalonia would be entirely broken. It was more than ever expedient to press this great operation, as that fortress, stripped of a large por-

Suchet's reasons for persisting in the siege of Taragona.

April 26.

of the war."—CAMPOVERDE'S *Proclamation, 5th April* 1811; TORENO, iv. 116.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

tion of its defenders sent to the relief of Figueras, would fall more easily than under any other circumstances could be expected."[1]

[1] Suchet Mem. ii. 16, 17. Nap. iv. 63, 64. Tor. iv. 122, 123.

Description of Taragona.

TARAGONA, which Suchet, in obedience not less of the express injunctions of the Emperor, than the dictates of sound policy on the subject, was now seriously resolved to besiege, is a city of great antiquity, and celebrated from the earliest times in the wars of the Peninsula. The Tarraco of the ancients, it was the capital, in the time of the Romans, of Citerior Spain: though sunk from its pristine magnificence, it still retained many remains of former splendour; and great part of the rampart, which still encircled its edifices, had been erected by the hands of the legions. The town consisted of a rectangular parallelogram, the northern part of which is perched on a rocky eminence, of which the eastern base is washed by the waves of the Mediterranean. The lower town is situated at the south-west of the rectangle, on the banks of the Francoli, which glides in a gentle current into the sea; and the whole inhabitants did not, at the time of which we speak, exceed eleven thousand souls, though nearly an equal number of armed men had, ever since the commencement of the war, been there assembled around the ruling junta of Catalonia. The garrison, however, as Suchet had foreseen, had been so much reduced by the large expeditions fitted out under Campoverde for the relief of Figueras, that, when the French appeared before the place in the beginning of May, it did not consist of more than six thousand men, including twelve hundred armed inhabitants, and the seamen of the port. The principal defence of the place on the north-east, where the great road to Barcelona entered its walls, consisted in a line of redoubts con-

nected by a curtain, with a ditch and covered way, running from the sea to the rocks on which the upper town is built; and behind this exterior line there was a rocky space called the Milagro, lying between the castellated cliffs of the upper town and the sea. The approach to the city on the south-east, where the Francoli flowed in a sluggish current into the sea, is perfectly flat; and as that side appeared least protected by nature, a newly constructed line of fortifications had been erected both towards the sea and the river; in the interior of which a fort, termed the Fort Royal, formed a sort of citadel to the lower part of the city. The upper town, which both by nature and art was much the strongest part of the fortress, was separated by a complete rampart from the lower, and communicated with Fort Olivo, a large outwork eight hundred yards distant, built on a rocky eminence from which the place might have been commanded, by an old aqueduct which brought water to the city. The place was, generally speaking, strong, chiefly from the rugged and inaccessible nature of the cliffs on which the greater part of its ramparts were built; but it had several weak points, especially on the southern side; the ample circuit of its walls required more than double the garrison within them to provide a proper defence; and though the English squadron of three sail of the line, under Commodore Codrington, in the bay, had a most imposing appearance, and might aid considerably in the defence; yet it could not be concealed that it could give but little support to the breaches, and that if the lower town were carried, the upper, now cut off from all communication with the harbour and the sea, would soon be forced to surrender.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 35, 36. Nap. iv. 70, 71. Tor. iv. 125, 126.

Being aware what a desperate resistance he would

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

encounter in assailing this important fortress, the last link which enabled the Catalonians to communicate with Cadiz, Valencia, and the rest of Spain, as well as the British fleet, Suchet had taken extraordinary precautions for the success of the siege. Immense convoys had been collected in Aragon, which still retained its character of the granary of the army; the flourishing town of Reuss in the vicinity had been fortified, and contained his principal magazines; armed posts along the road in his rear, towards Saragossa, afforded points of protection for his supplies; and a considerable part of his army was scattered over their line of march to repel the incursions of the Somatenes from the neighbouring hills. All things having, by great and long continued exertions, been at last got in readiness, the French army moved forward, and, approaching the fortress from the south, crossed the stream of the Francoli, and completed the investment on that side from the foot of the cliffs of Olivo to the sea. In doing so, however, they were exposed to a severe fire from the fort on the one side, and the English squadron on the other, by which, in a short time, two hundred men were struck down; but, notwithstanding this loss, they succeeded in maintaining their ground, and next day repulsed a sortie by the garrison to drive them from it. The French had for the undertaking, twenty thousand men, composing the very best troops in the Peninsula, and a hundred pieces of cannon; but the Spanish garrison was receiving continual reinforcements by sea. Campoverde himself arrived with four thousand men on the 10th, and, after reinforcing the garrison, again set sail to join his lieutenants in the attempt to raise the siege. Colonel Green soon afterwards made his

Commencement of the siege.

May 4.

May 5.

May 10.

appearance from Cadiz with considerable English stores, and fifty thousand dollars in money; while Sarsfield and D'Erolles resumed their former stations near Valls, Mont Blanch, and Igualada, to threaten the communications of the besieging force.[1]

[1] Belm. iii. 479, 483. Tor. iv. 127, 128. Suchet, ii. 36, 45.

The attack of the besiegers being directed, in the first instance, against the lower town on its southern front, near the Francoli stream, they found themselves severely galled by the fire of Fort Olivo; and, on that account, soon felt the necessity of directing their operations, in the first place, against that formidable outwork. Several sallies by the besieged, in some of which nearly six thousand men were engaged, and which, though repulsed, seriously impeded his operations, convinced Suchet, at the same time, of the necessity of contracting his communications, and accumulating all the disposable forces he could command round the fortress, which was now defended by above twelve thousand soldiers. The fortified station on Mont Blanch, accordingly, was abandoned, and its garrison drawn in to reinforce the besiegers, the line of communication by Falcet and Felippe de Balaguer being alone preserved open. Ground was broke before Fort Olivo on the 21st; but the vigorous fire of the Spanish batteries, and the extraordinary difficulties of the ground, rendered the progress of the trenches extremely slow; and it was not till the 27th that thirteen guns were pushed so near as to be able to breach the place, and early on the 28th before the fire was opened. Notwithstanding the weight of metal with which it was attacked, the gunners of the fort replied with uncommon vigour, and little progress was made during the next day in breaching the ramparts; but, towards night, the engineers succeeded in blowing down the palisades which defended

Preparations for storming of Fort Olivo. May 18, and 22.

May 21.

May 28.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

the junction of the aqueduct and wall, and left an entrance almost on a level with the ramparts. The breach was not yet practicable; but this ill-defended point afforded a hope of effecting an entrance, and the circumstances of the besiegers, and the increasing numbers and audacity of the Somatenes in their rear, as well as the general enthusiasm excited by the fall of Figueras, rendered it indispensable to hazard an immediate assault. It was therefore ordered for that very night: two chosen columns were selected for the attack: every man in the army, as well as the town, felt that on its success the fate of the siege, and probably of the war in Catalonia, would depend.[1]

1 Belm. iii. 494, and 497. Nap. iv. 76, 77. Tor. iv. 129, 130. Suchet, ii. 52, 55.

It is carried by storm. May 29.

Four guns were discharged at nightfall as the signal for the assault; a variety of false attacks were immediately directed, with loud cheers and beating of drums, against the ramparts of the fortress, and the columns destined for the real assault of the breach and the aqueduct entrance of the fort, swiftly and silently advanced to their destined points. The Spaniards, distracted by the fire and rolling of drums in every direction, and unable from the darkness to see the assailants, opened a fire from every rampart and bastion in the place: the vast circumference of Taragona presented an undulating sheet of flame: every cliff, every salient angle, stood forth in bright illumination amidst the general gloom; while the English ships in the bay opened a distant cannonade, which increased the grandeur of the spectacle, and threw flaming projectiles that streaked the firmament in every direction with flitting gleams of light. Amidst this awful scene the assaulting columns, shrouded in gloom, advanced bravely to the assault. That destined for the attack of the breach stumbled in the dark against a Spanish column, which was proceeding from

the town to relieve the garrison of the fort; the two bodies, from the violence of the shock, soon got intermingled; and, in the confusion which ensued, some of the assailants got in at the gate opened to receive the succour; and, when it was closed, their comrades outside, now close to the walls, began to mount them by escalade. Meanwhile the other column was still more fortunate. The front ranks, who had descended into the fosse, indeed found their scaling-ladders too short, and were soon swept away by the murderous fire from the rampart; but the aqueduct presented a bridge, narrow indeed, but capable of being passed by resolute men, now that the palisades were blown down, and over this narrow ledge the Italian grenadiers made their way into the fort. Though the defences, however, were now penetrated in two different quarters, the brave garrison disdained to surrender: facing their enemies on the ramparts, wherever they presented themselves, they still fought like lions: the cannoniers fell at their guns: the infantry perished in their ranks as they stood: and it was only by pouring in fresh columns of unwearied troops, who, as day dawned, mowed the heroic defenders down by concentric volleys on all sides, that the resistance was at length overcome. Two hundred of the assailants perished in this desperate assault: but the loss of the besieged was still greater, and nearly a thousand men were made prisoners, the remainder of the garrison having in desperation leaped from the ramparts and escaped into the city.[1]

[1] Vacani, 124, 126. Belm. iii. 497, 502. Suchet, ii. 56, 60. Tor. iv. 131, 132. Nap. iv. 78, 81.

The loss of Fort Olivo was a severe discouragement to the Spaniards, as it had been generally considered as impregnable, and contained ammunition and provisions for a long siege. Its fall was poorly compensated on the following day by the arrival of

CHAP. LXI.

1811.

reinforcements to the amount of two thousand men, who came by sea from Minorca and Valencia. With their aid a sortie was attempted by three thousand men to endeavour to regain the fort before the French had time to establish themselves in their conquest; but so rapid had been the dispositions of General Rogniat, who commanded the engineers, for its defence, that it was repulsed with loss. A council of war was upon this held in Taragona, and it was decided that Campoverde should leave the place, and endeavour to rouse the mountaineers of Catalonia, who already mustered ten thousand strong in the neighbourhood of Valls, to raise the siege; while the command of the garrison was committed to Don Juan de Contreras, a brave man, who ably and faithfully executed the arduous trust committed to his charge. He immediately adopted the most energetic measures for the public defence; levied a heavy tax on the principal merchants, which replenished the military chest; and divided the whole inhabitants, without exception of age or sex, into companies, to whom various duties, according to their capacity, were assigned: the aged and women to attend the wounded and prepare bandages, the children to carry water and ammunition to the troops, the men capable of supporting arms to reinforce the soldiers on the ramparts; while Commodore Codrington materially aided the defence by continually landing fresh supplies of provisions and warlike stores, and removing the sick and wounded to the neighbouring and friendly harbour of Valencia.[1]

Preparations of the Spaniards for a protracted defence.

May 31.

[1] Such. ii. 61, 63. Belm. iii. 506, 507. Tor. iv. 133, 134. Nap. iv. 79, 80.

Finding the garrison resolute in maintaining the defence, notwithstanding the disaster they had experienced, Suchet commenced his approaches in form against the lower town, on the side of the Francoli

river. Sarsfield at the same time entered the fortress with reinforcements, and took the command in the menaced quarter. The French engineers, by great exertion, had there established fifty pieces of heavy cannon in the trenches, which were gradually pushed forward to breaching distance, notwithstanding repeated sallies of the besieged. On the 7th June the fire commenced against Fort Francoli, and on the same night a lodgement was effected in that outwork which forms the south-eastern angle of the fortress, close to the sea. By this means the French gained the important advantage of closing the entrance of the harbour to the British fleet: but Codrington still kept up his communication with the town by means of the point of Melagro, which was beyond the reach of the guns from Francoli; and he soon after landed four thousand men from Valencia at Villa Nova, who made their way across the hills to Campoverde, who was now seriously preparing in their rear to disquiet the besiegers; while D'Erolles, near Falcet, attacked and destroyed a valuable convoy on its route to their camp. Meanwhile, the garrison of Taragona were so confident in their means of defence, that they dispatched a body of horse out by the road to Barcelona, who broke through the French lines of investment, and succeeded in joining their comrades destined to raise the siege. Several gallant sorties also were made by the Spaniards from the lower town, some of which proved entirely successful, and sensibly retarded the approaches of the French, which were now directed against the Orleans bastion, still on the southern front of that part of the fortress.[1]

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

Progress of the siege, and preparations by the Spaniards to raise it. June 7. June 15. June 20.

[1] Belm. iii 512, 518. Tor. iv. 135, 137. Nap. iv. 87, 89. Suchet, ii. 63, 81.

These untoward events seriously alarmed Suchet for the event of the siege. The garrison of the for-

CHAP. LXI.

1811.

The approaches are brought up to the lower town.

tress had now been augmented to nearly seventeen thousand men: the losses of the defence were constantly supplied by fresh troops; his own besieging force was hardly of greater amount, when the losses it had sustained, already amounting to two thousand five hundred men, were taken into view; and fourteen thousand irregular troops, under Campoverde and Sarsfield, were assembled to threaten his communications and cut off his convoys. An ordinary general, in such circumstances, would have abandoned the undertaking. But Suchet was one of those remarkable characters who find resources in themselves to overcome even the most formidable obstacles: he saw that the issue of the campaign was entirely centred in Taragona; that the siege was a combat of life or death to the opposite parties; and he resolved, at all hazards, to persist in the attempt. Abandoning, therefore, all subordinate stations, and summoning to his aid four thousand additional troops from the rear, he concentrated all his efforts upon pushing forward the approaches, and keeping up the spirits of his men. Such, however, was the vigour of the Spanish fire, and the obstacles which they threw in the way by repeated sorties, that from sixty to a hundred men fell every day in the trenches; and it was evident that both the numbers and spirits of the soldiers would sink before so incessant a consumption, if it was of long endurance. At length, however, on the 21st June, three practicable breaches were declared in the rampart of the lower town, and the troops were directed to make ready for an assault.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 80, 84. Belm. iii. 521, 525. Nap. iv. 86. Tor. iv. 137, 139.

At seven o'clock at night, fifteen hundred chosen men were disposed in three columns, and on a signal of four bombs discharged at once, advanced in silence,

but with a swift and steady step, towards the breaches. The first column, under General Bouvion, rushed on rapidly to the breach of the Orleans bastion, which they were fortunate enough to surmount almost before they were perceived, and before the enemy had time to fire two mines which had been run under the ruined part of the wall. The Spaniards, surprised, were driven back to the gorge of the redoubt, where they stood firm, and arrested the assaulting column: but fresh troops pouring in, they were at length overcome, and the victors hotly pursuing their advantage, made themselves masters of the whole works in the south-west angle of the lower town, and arrived at the foot of the rampart of Fort Royal. Meanwhile, the second column, whose attack was directed against the breach in the bastion of St Charles, near the sea-coast, met with a severe resistance, and its head was arrested on the breach; but Suchet no sooner perceived this than he ordered up a second body, which, pressing on immediately behind the first, fairly pushed it through the perilous pass, and the rampart was won. The whole bastions and walls now swarmed with the assailants; the Spaniards, without a leader, were thrown into confusion, and fled, some to the upper town, some into the houses in the lower, where they were speedily pursued and massacred: the shouts of the victors, the cries of the vanquished, were heard on all sides; the warehouses near the harbour took fire, and soon filled the heavens with a prodigious flame; in the general confusion the vessels in the port cut their cables and stood out to sea; while the English squadron increased the horrors of the scene by pouring their broadsides indiscriminately into the quays and ramparts, now

Assault of the lower town. June 21.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

crowded with the enemy's soldiers. In the midst of this frightful confusion, however, the assailants steadily pursued their advantages: amidst a terrific carnage, alike of soldiers and citizens, the besieged were driven entirely from their defences; Fort Royal itself was carried by escalade in the first tumult of victory; and when morning dawned the French were masters of the harbour and whole lower town: the principal warehouses were smoking in ruins; fifteen hundred Spaniards lay dead in the streets and on the breaches, besides five hundred French who had fallen in the assault; eighty heavy guns which stood on the ramparts were in the enemy's power; and the whole remaining hopes of Taragona centred in the infuriated multitude who crowded the walls of the upper town.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 85, 87. Belm. iii. 529, 531, Tor. iv. 137, 138. Nap. iv. 91.

Fruitless attempt to raise the siege, and failure of succour from England.

But that multitude still presented an undaunted front to the enemy, and, amidst the ruin of all their hopes, still hoisted with mournful resolution the standard of independence. A flag of truce displayed by Suchet the day after the successful assault was sternly rejected. Loud were the clamours, however, which arose, both in the city and the adjoining province, against Campoverde, for his inactivity in not seriously attempting to raise the siege; and to such a height did the ferment arrive after the fall of the lower town, that the Junta of Catalonia sent him positive orders at all hazards to attempt it. But though he had twelve thousand infantry and two thousand horse under his command, and the besieged had all their forces ready to co-operate on their side, nothing was done: the officer to whom the principal attack was entrusted was too timid to undertake it; and Campoverde himself, after a vain

June 24.

demonstration, drew off, leaving the garrison to its fate. Still, however, the besieged held out undismayed; and their spirits were elevated again to the highest pitch, when, on the 26th, two thousand English from Cadiz, under Colonel Skerret, arrived in the bay. Loud and enthusiastic were the cheers of the excited multitude when the English commander, with his staff, landed and proceeded to the breach. The fall of Fort Olivo, the assault of the lower town, the terrors of Suchet, were forgotten, when the scarlet uniforms were seen traversing the streets. But these generous and confiding hopes were miserably disappointed. The British officers, though brave and zealous, had not the true military genius; they did not see where the vital point of the war in the east of Spain was to be found. The engineers reported that the wall, already shaking under the French fire, would soon give way: the Spanish garrison appeared adequate to the defence of the now diminished front, which was alone assailed; and therefore they merely put their troops at the disposition of the Spanish authorities, without insisting that they should share the dangers of the assault. Contreras, who saw that they despaired of the defence of the place, generously refused to require their aid in the town, and acquiesced in their project to co-operate with Campoverde externally in attempting to raise the siege. This, however, failed from the impossibility of getting that general and the governor to agree on any joint plan of operations; and the result was, that the precious hours were lost in useless deliberation. Two thousand British troops, capable of rendering Taragona as impregnable as Acre had been to the enemy, and changing the whole

June 26.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

fortune of the war in the east of Spain, remained on board their transports, passive spectators of the last struggles for Catalonian independence.[1]

[1] Tor. iv. 140, 141. Nap. iv. 94, 95. South. v. 305, 306; Contreras' Report. Suchet, ii. 421.

This resolution of the English commanders to keep themselves afloat, proved fatal to Taragona. The withdrawal of the English, universally deemed in the Peninsula at that period invincible, inevitably produced the general impression that the defence could no longer be maintained, and spread distrust and irresolution at the very moment when vigour and enthusiasm were indispensably necessary to avert the crisis. Suchet, meanwhile, was stimulated by the strongest motives to press on and complete his conquest. The town was half taken; the wall which separated him from the moiety which still remained in the hands of the Spaniards, had no counterscarp or wet ditch; the harbour was in his hands; and his breaching batteries, run up to within musket-shot of the walls, had already begun to shake their aged masonry. Contreras, however, though abandoned by the British, was not dismayed. A thick hedge of aloe-trees, no small obstacle to troops, grew at the foot of the rampart; defences behind the breach were prepared; the adjoining houses loop-holed as at Saragossa; barricades were erected across the streets leading into the interior of the town; the breach itself was occupied by three strong battalions; reserves immediately behind were ready to support any point which might be menaced; and eight thousand veteran troops within the walls still promised a desperate resistance. Such was the vigour with which the fire of the place was kept up, that the parapets in the nearest French trenches erected within the lower town, were shot away; and

Preparations for storming of the upper town. June 27, 28.

the gunners stood exposed beside their pieces to a tremendous storm of musketry from the rampart, which swept away numbers every minute. The place of those who fell, however, was instantly supplied by others; the fire of the assailants' batteries continued without intermission; the breach rapidly widened with every discharge, while the impatience on either side for the final struggle became such, that the soldiers on the walls and in the trenches stood up and hurled defiance with frantic gestures at each other, in the midst of the tempest of shot which was flying on all sides. At length Suchet, at five in the afternoon, deeming the breach sufficiently widened to admit of being carried, traversed the ranks, addressing himself to every company; and, seeing the men wrought up to the highest pitch, gave the signal for assault, and fifteen hundred chosen troops, sallying forth from the trenches, rushed forwards towards the rampart, while eight thousand more were in reserve in the trenches to support their attack.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 88, 99. Nap. iv. 96, 97. Tor. iv. 142, 143. Belm. iii. 531, 543.

Its success. June 29.

The assailants had to cross a space a hundred and twenty yards broad before reaching the foot of the wall; and the row of aloes at its foot offered no inconsiderable obstacle to their advance. When they leapt out of the trenches, the whole French batteries instantly ceased firing, while that of the Spaniards from the summit of the rampart redoubled, and a frightful storm of musketry, grape, hand-grenades, and howitzers, swept away the head of the column. On they rushed, however, till the aloes were reached, but their line was found to be impenetrable; the column required to make a circuit to get round, and the delay and confusion incident to this obstacle had wellnigh proved fatal to the assault. When the troops, disordered and out of breath, at length reached

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

the foot of the rampart, and began to ascend the breach, the crumbling ruins gave way under their feet; its summit was crowned by a phalanx of determined men, strongly armed with bayonets, swords, and hand-grenades. A converging fire of musketry fell on all sides, and the leading files were struck down by a shower of grape in flank from the bastion of St John. The column hesitated and recoiled in confusion; already the cries of victory were heard from the rampart, when Suchet, who was at hand to arrest the disorder, pushed forward a strong reserve to its support, and himself followed with his staff to the scene of danger. Still the assailants hesitated at the foot of the breach, and, spreading out on either side in wild confusion, began to return in vain the fire of the enemy, or take shelter under the projections of the bastion of St Paul. Upon this, General Habert, Colonel Pepe, and the whole officers of the staff, themselves rushed forward to the breach, followed by the commanders of companies of the assaulting columns. Many fell in the ascent; but the remainder pushed on with heroic courage, and reached the top; the mass behind re-formed and rapidly followed on their footsteps, and the town was won. Eight thousand French, in the highest state of excitement, speedily streamed over the breach, and spread like a torrent along the ramparts on either side; and in the general confusion the three battalions, placed behind as a reserve for the defenders, were overthrown. A panic seized the Spanish troops in the interior; almost all their defences were abandoned; and it was only at the barricades and loop-holed houses near the street of La Rembla, that any serious resistance was experienced. There, however, a handful of desperate men defended themselves like lions, and it was only by continually bringing up

fresh columns of attack, and the failure of ammunition among the besieged, that they were at length overcome, and the town finally taken.*[1]

The fame justly due to Suchet and his indefatigable army for this glorious exploit, which was one of the greatest blows struck during the whole Peninsular war, and gave a decisive preponderance to the French arms in the east of Spain, was deeply tarnished by the savage cruelty which disgraced their triumph after the city was taken. The heroic governor, Contreras, who had received a deep bayonet wound in the breast, near the breach, was borne on a board into the presence of the French commander, while the carnage was yet reeking in every quarter. Instead of admiring the valour and commiserating the situation of his fallen enemy, the victorious general reproached him for the tenacity of his defence, and declared he deserved instant death for having continued the resistance after the breach was practicable. "I know of no law," replied Contreras, "which compelled me to capitulate before the assault; besides, I expected succour. My person should be respected like that of the other prisoners, and the French general will

[1] Suchet, ii. 93, 106. Nap. iv. 97, 98. Tor. iv. 143. Belm. iii. 539, 545.

Disgraceful cruelty of the French to the city.

* To such a height had the spirit of Suchet's troops arisen, that an Italian soldier named Bianchini, who, at the assault of Fort Olivo, had pursued the Spanish garrison to the foot of the walls of the town, and made some prisoners there, being brought before the general-in-chief, and asked what recompense he desired, answered—"The honour," said he, "of mounting first to the assault of Taragona." On the 28th June, this brave man, now promoted to the rank of a sergeant, presented himself in full dress before the general, and claimed the honour which had been promised him. He obtained it: was seen at the head of the forlorn hope; received a wound, but still pressed on, encouraging his comrades to follow him; was twice again wounded without stopping; and at length fell, pierced to the heart by a musket-ball, near the summit of the breach! The spirit of Rome is not extinct in Italy: it is only obscured by the corruptions which have overspread the higher ranks from long-continued civilisation.—*See* SUCHET'S *Memoirs*, ii. 100, 101.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

respect it; if not, to him the infamy, to me the glory." This dignified answer recalled Suchet to his better feelings: he treated the captive general with respect, and soon after loaded him with kindness, and made advances to induce him to accept rank in the service of Joseph; but the brave Spaniard was proof alike against his seductions as his menaces, and he was in consequence sent as a prisoner to the citadel of Bouillon, in the Low Countries, from whence he afterwards made his escape. But in other quarters the work of slaughter went on without intermission: Gonzalez, the second in command, fell pierced by more than twenty wounds: nine hundred wounded, who had sought refuge in the cathedral, and lay on the pavement weltering in blood, were spared; but upon the defenceless inhabitants the storm of the victor's fury fell with unexampled severity. Armed and unarmed, men and women, grey hairs and infant innocence, attractive youth and wrinkled age, were alike butchered by the infuriated troops, whose passions were, not like the English soldiers, those of plunder or drunkenness, but the infernal unrelenting spirit of vengeance. Above six thousand human beings, almost all defenceless, were massacred on that dreadful night, which will be remembered in Spain as long as the human race endures; the greater part of the garrison, which had precipitated itself over the rocks, or rushed through the northern gates, enclosed within the French lines and the fire of the ramparts, were made prisoners; and when the magistrates of the surrounding country were, on the following morning, by Suchet's orders, brought into the town, and marched through the streets to see what fate awaited those who resisted the French arms, "the blood of the Spaniards," to use the expression of the French

journalist of the siege, "inundated the streets and the houses." Humanity, however, amidst such scenes of horror, has to recount with pleasure that many French officers exerted themselves, though too often in vain and at the hazard of their own lives, to stay the carnage; and that numbers of individuals owed their lives to their generous intercession.[1]

[1] South. v. 307, 309. Tor. iv. 144, 146. Suchet, ii. 105, 114. Belm. iii. 544, 547. Contreras' Report, No. 22. Suchet, ii. 423, 424.

The trophies of the victory were immense; its results decisive. The French loss had been very severe during the siege, amounting to full five thousand men; but this was much exceeded by that of the besieged. Nine thousand of the garrison were made prisoners; three hundred and twenty guns mounted on the ramparts, fifteen thousand muskets, and above a million of cartridges, fell into the hands of the victors. The total loss to the Spaniards, from the commencement of the operations, had been little short of twenty thousand of their best troops. The French artillery had discharged forty-two thousand projectiles, the Spaniards a hundred and twenty thousand, during this siege; in every point of view, one of the most memorable in modern times. But its greatest results were the depriving the patriots of their grand military arsenal, and principal point of communication with the British fleets and the ocean in those parts of Spain. Justly impressed with the magnitude of those advantages, as well as the fortitude and ability displayed in their acquisition, Napoleon sent Suchet his marshal's baton, with an injunction to proceed as he had begun, and earn his dukedom under the walls of Valencia.[1]

Immense results of this siege.

[1] Suchet, iii. 121. Belm. 549, 550. Tor. iv. 147.

Anxious to secure, by rapidity of operations, the whole fruits which might be expected from so great a stroke, Marshal Suchet no sooner found himself master of Taragona, than he marched out with the

CHAP. LXI.

1811.

Suchet's next operations.

greater part of his forces against Campoverde, whose troops, divided between consternation at its fall, and indignation at his temporizing policy in not relieving it, were alike disheartened and distracted, and incapable of opposing any serious resistance to his arms. The Spanish general, however, fell back so rapidly into the upper valleys and mountain ridges of Catalonia, that Suchet could not reach his footsteps; and various atrocious deeds of cruelty, by which the French marshal endeavoured to strike terror into the Catalans during his march, only revived the exasperation, and sowed again the seeds of an interminable war in the province. Campoverde, however, finding himself in no condition to make head against so formidable an assailant, retired to the mountain ridges on the frontier of Aragon, and openly announced his intention, which a council of war supported, of abandoning the province altogether as a lost country. Upon this all the soldiers in his army who were not Catalans deserted; numbers of the natives of the province returned in despair to their homes: grief and dejection universally prevailed. Meanwhile fifteen hundred prisoners, chiefly wounded, were captured at Villa Nova when endeavouring to embark: the road to Barcelona opened: and the Spanish rearguard defeated at Villa Franca. The Valencians, however, so loudly remonstrated against being abandoned to their fate in the Catalonian mountains, the more especially when their own country was evidently threatened, that Campoverde agreed to return to Cervera; and the Valencians, three thousand in number, made their way to the sea-coast, where they were embarked at Arun de Mar. The English commodore, however, who took them on board, refused to embark any but Valencians, and

June 29.

July 3.

July 5.

July 9.

thus the bulk of the army was forcibly retained on its own shores. Ultimately Campoverde was deprived of the command, which was conferred on General Lacy; and that indefatigable commander immediately gave a new organization to his army, suited to the altered circumstances. Dismissing a great proportion of the officers, and almost all the horses, he re-formed great part of the troops into guerilla bands, under whatever chiefs they chose to select, and numbers of them repaired to the standard of MINA, in Navarre, who had now risen to celebrity; and, after undergoing hardships and privations which exceed all figured in romance, ultimately joined the victorious host which, under Wellington, righted, at the eleventh hour, the wrongs of their country.[1]

1811. July 11.

Tor. iv. 148, 150. Nap. iv. 100, 103. Belm. iii. 550, 553.

Description of Mont Serrat.

While the elements of resistance to French domination were thus, to all appearance, melting away in Catalonia, Suchet, whose activity neither difficulty could check, nor prosperity diminish, executed a *coup-de-main* against MONT SERRAT, a celebrated mountain fastness, and now the last stronghold of independence in that part of Spain. It was composed of the convent of Our Lady of Mont Serrat, formerly possessing great riches, removed at an early period of the war to Minorca by the monks, and stood upon the summit of a fantastic mountain, overlooking from the westward the plain of the Llobregat, in the neighbourhood of Barcelona. The prodigious height of the precipices on which the buildings were situated; the wild forms of the peaks which shot up as it were into the sky around them; the naked and savage character of the rocks, like the bones of a gigantic skeleton, of which the whole upper part of the mountain is composed; the numerous hermitages which nestled like swallows' nests in the

CHAP. LXI

1811.

clefts, or crowned the projecting points in its long ascent; the blue waters of the Mediterranean bounding the distant horizon, from the higher regions; the smiling aspect of the plain of Barcelona, teeming with riches and glittering with buildings at its foot, joined to the massy pile, Gothic towers, and aerial spires, of the convent itself, at the summit—had long impressed the minds of the Spaniards with religious awe, and rendered this monastic retreat one of the most celebrated in the south of Europe. But war in its most terrible form was now to penetrate these abodes of solitude and meditation; and the clang of musketry and the thunders of artillery were to re-echo amidst wilds hitherto responsive only to the notes of gratitude or the song of praise.[1]

[1] Tor. iv. 151, 152. Suchet, ii. 122, 123.

Storming of the convent. July 25.

The convent of Notre Dame, evacuated by the monks, had, from the beginning of the war, been a favourite station of the patriot bands; and though its situation, at the distance of seven leagues only from Barcelona, had long rendered it at once a point of importance to the Spaniards and annoyance to the French, yet, from the apparently impregnable strength of its situation, no attempt had been made to dislodge them from it. Of late considerable pains had been taken to strengthen the position: the steep and narrow paths which wound up the long ascent, had in many places been fortified; batteries had been erected on some commanding points; deep ditches drawn across the road in others; and near the monastry itself a strong intrenchment had been thrown up, while its gates were barricaded, and massy walls loop-holed for the fire of musketry. The principal approach was on the north side by Casa Mansana, and it was on it that the greatest care of the garrison had been bestowed; that which

ascended the mountain on the south by Colbato, and on the east towards Monestrol, were mere paths, so steep and rugged that they were deemed altogether inaccessible to a body of troops. Suchet, however, having accurately enquired into the nature of the ground, resolved to menace all the three approaches at once; the principal attack, under General Maurice Mathieu, being directed on the northern side. This column experienced no serious opposition till it arrived at the chapel of Saint Cecilia; but there a strong intrenchment blockaded the road, while a severe fire of grape and musketry from the overhanging woods and cliffs seemed to render attack impossible. The grenadiers halted, and fell back till they were out of reach of the fire: but, meanwhile, Maurice Mathieu detached some light troops to scale the rocks which arose behind the intrenchments; and these gallant men, after undergoing incredible fatigues, succeeded in establishing themselves on the heights in the rear of the Spanish position, and opened a plunging fire on the gunners at their pieces. Encouraged by this joyful sound, the grenadiers in front returned to the charge, and by a rapid rush succeeded in passing the perilous defile, and carrying the work: a second battery was won in like manner, though the Spaniards stood their ground bravely, and were bayoneted at their guns; and when the assailants reached the summit, and were preparing to assault the monastery, the sound of musketry behind, and a sudden rush of the garrison towards the barriers in front, told them that those intrusted with the attack on the side of Colbato had already succeeded in surmounting all the difficulties of the ascent, and that the last stronghold of the enemy was won. They had got into the in-

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

closures by means of a postern which had been neglected, and made their way by a sudden surprise into the convent. Baron d' Erolles threw himself with the greater part of the garrison, down some ravines, known only to the Spanish mountaineers, and reached the Llobregat without any material loss: but the convent, with ten pieces of cannon and all its stores, was taken, and the reputation of invincibility reft from the last asylum of Catalonian independence. Two of the monks were massacred in the first heat of victory, but the officers succeeded in rescuing the remainder; the hermits were left unmolested in their moss-grown cells. This brilliant success, coming so soon after the capture of Taragona, produced a powerful impression over the whole province; many guerilla bands laid down their arms; several towns sent in their submission; and Suchet, deeming Macdonald now in sufficient strength to complete its pacification, returned to Saragossa to accelerate his preparations for the expedition against Valencia.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 124, 131. Nap. iv. 102, 104. Tor. iv. 150, 151.

Blockade and surrender of Figueras. Aug. 19.

No force now remained in Catalonia capable of interfering with the blockade of Figueras, which Napoleon was daily becoming more desirous of regaining for the French empire. Macdonald, on his part, was not less solicitous for its reduction, as well to wipe out the blot which its capture had affixed on his scutcheon, as to propitiate the emperor, who was much displeased at the repeated checks he had experienced, and was already preparing to give him a successor. Despairing of effecting the reduction of so strong a place, garrisoned by four thousand resolute men, by open force, he preferred the surer but more tedious method of blockade; and for this purpose drew vast lines of circumvallation around the

town, resembling rather the imperishable works of the Roman legions, than those constructed during the fierce but brief career of modern warfare. These lines were eight miles long, forming a complete circuit of the town, beyond the reach of cannon-shot, and effectually barring all communication between the besieged and the circumjacent country. They were formed every where of a ditch, palisades, covered way, and curtain, were strengthened at equal distances by bastions armed with heavy cannon, and defended by twenty thousand men. Secure behind these inaccessible ramparts, the French troops quietly waited till famine should compel the besieged to surrender: such was their strength, and the vigilance with which they were guarded, that the sallies of the garrison, and the efforts of the Somatenes in the adjacent hills to throw succours into the fortress, were alike baffled; and at length, after losing fifteen hundred of their number in these ineffectual sorties, and having exhausted all their means of subsistence, the Spaniards were compelled to surrender at discretion. Thus was accomplished the prophecy of Suchet, that the surprise of Figueras, by inducing the Spaniards to detach a portion of the defenders of Taragona to its succour, would prove rather prejudicial than auspicious to their arms; and the wisdom of his military counsel not to endanger success by dividing his means, but, relinquishing all minor objects, to concentrate his whole force upon the principal stronghold of the enemy, and vital point of the campaign.[1]

Aug. 19.

[1] Belm. i. 206, 207. Tor. iv. 154, 155. Vict. et Conq. xx. 533, 534.

Having completed his preparations, Marshal Suchet, in obedience to the positive orders of Napoleon, in the beginning of September commenced his march against Valencia, at the head of somewhat

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

above twenty thousand men; the remainder of his force, which numbered nearly forty thousand combatants, being absorbed in the garrisons of the numerous fortresses which he had captured, and in keeping up his extensive communications. The Spaniards, meanwhile, had not been idle. Aware of the formidable onset which now awaited them, the Junta of Valencia had for a considerable period been busily engaged in the means of defence; the fortifications of Peniscola, Oropesa, and Saguntum, which lay on the great road from Barcelona, had been materially strengthened; the latter had a garrison of three thousand men, and was amply provided with the means of defence; Valencia itself was covered by an external line of redoubts and an intrenched camp, which, in addition to its massy though antiquated walls, and ardent population, inflamed by the recollection of two successive defeats of the French, seemed to promise a difficult, perhaps a doubtful contest. Blake, the captain-general of the province, and a member of the Council of Government, was at the head of the army, which mustered five-and-twenty thousand men, comprising almost all the regular soldiers in the Peninsula. He had it in his power, if overmatched, to fall back on the impregnable walls of Carthagena or Alicante, while the sea in his rear every where afforded the inestimable advantage, at once of succour from the English in case of resistance, and the means of evasion in the event of defeat.[1]

Invasion of Valencia by Suchet, and preparations for its defence by the Spaniards Sept. 15.

1 Vict. et Conq. xx. 334, 335. Jom. iii. 526, 527. Tor. iv. 208, 211. Suchet, ii. 143, 151, 155.

MURVIEDRO, the ancient SAGUNTUM, is a fortress built upon the summit of a steep and rocky hill, at the bottom of which the modern town of Murviedro stands. The waters of the Mediterranean, in the days of Hannibal, approached to within a mile of its

Description of Saguntum.

eastern walls;[1] but at present they are five miles distant, a proof how much the sea has retired along that coast in the intervening ages. Many remains of its former grandeur are still to be found by the curious antiquary, although its greatness has so much declined that the modern city contains but six thousand inhabitants, and occupies only a corner of the ample circuit of the ancient walls. The modern fortress, which bears the name of San Fernando de Saguntum, stands on the summit of the mountain round the base of which the ancient city was clustered, and consisted at this time of two redoubts, armed only with seventeen pieces of cannon. The garrison, however, was three thousand strong; the principal defence of the place consisted in its position, perched on the summit of a rock, perpendicular on three sides, and only accessible on the west by a steep and devious ascent; and its importance was great, as commanding the only road from Barcelona or Aragon to Valencia.[2]

[1] Polyb. l. iii. c. 2.

[2] Tor. iv. 209, 210. Suchet, ii. 154, 159. Victor et Conq. xx. 335, 336.

The lower town upon the approach of the French was abandoned, and occupied by General Hubert's division without resistance. Immediately the investment of the fort was completed; and the French engineers having by means of their telescopes discovered two old breaches in the walls, which were as yet only imperfectly barricaded with wood, though the besieged were endeavouring to erect a curtain of masonry behind them, conceived the design of carrying the place by escalade. The success which had attended a similar *coup-de-main* at the Col de Balaguer* seemed to encourage the attempt, and two columns were formed early on the 28th for the assault; but the vigilance of the Spanish

Siege and unsuccessful assault of Saguntum. Sept. 28.

* *Ante*, viii. 209.

CHAP. LXI. 1811. governor Andriani had penetrated the design; the assailants were received with a close and well-directed fire of grape and musketry, and repulsed with the loss of four hundred men. Warned by this check of the need of circumspection, Suchet now saw the necessity of making approaches in form; but for this purpose it was necessary to reduce the little fort of Oropesa, which commanded in a narrow defile the road by which alone artillery could be brought up from the great arsenal at Tortosa. It was attacked, accordingly, by a Neapolitan division; but, though it was only garrisoned by two hundred men, and armed with four guns, this Lilliputian stronghold held out till the 11th October, when it was taken after a practicable breach had been made in the rampart: while the garrison of another castle on the sea-coast near the same pass resolutely refused to capitulate, even when the wall was ruined and the enemy were mounting to assault; and succeeded, when the post was no longer tenable, in getting clear off by sea, and with the aid of an English frigate, to Valencia.[1]

Oct. 11.

Oct. 12.

[1] Suchet, ii. 158, 168. Tor. iv. 212, 214. Belm. i. 209.

A second assault defeated. Oct. 2.

Suchet, meanwhile, marched against and defeated a considerable body of guerillas under Don Carlos O'Donnell, which had assembled in his rear; and the heavy stores and siege equipage having been now brought up from the Ebro, the approaches against Saguntum were carried on with extraordinary vigour. A practicable breach having been made in the walls, a second assault was ordered on the 18th October. Though the guns in the fort were entirely silenced by the superior number and weight of the enemy's cannon, and the rampart had neither wet ditch nor exterior defences, yet the heroism of the garrison supplied all these defects. With indefati-

Oct. 18.

gable perseverance they collected sand-bags, with which they stopped up the chasm in the masonry occasioned by the French guns; their muskets returned a gallant though feeble fire to the thunder of the besiegers' artillery; and a band of dauntless men on the summit of the breach braved the French fire and provoked the imperial grenadiers to come on to the assault. Soon their desire was gratified. A chosen column, 8000 strong, was let loose from the trenches, and swiftly ascended towards the breach: they succeeded, though with great difficulty, in reaching its middle; but there the fire of musketry, discharged within pistol-shot of their heads, was so severe, and the shower of stones, hand grenades, and cold shot from the summit so overwhelming, that after a short and bloody struggle, they were hurled back to the foot of the hill with the loss of half their number, and Saguntum again, after the lapse of two thousand years, repulsed the soldiers of Napoleon, as it had done those of Hannibal.[1]*

[1] Nap. iv. 273, 274. Tor. iv. 214, 216. Suchet, ii. 168, 173. Vict. et Conq. xx. 136, 138.

Suchet's situation was now again full of peril. The guerilla parties infested the road between Tortosa and Oropesa; so as to render the conveyance of stores and provisions impossible, except by the detachment of a considerable force. Blake, with an army superior to his own, and entirely master of his operations, was in his front: he could not pass Sa-

Perilous situation of Suchet after this repulse.

* "Pœno cepisse jam se urbem, si paullulum adnitatur, credente; Saguntinis pro nudatâ mœnibus patriâ corpora obpouentibus, nec ullo pedem referente, ne in relictum a se locum, hostem immitteret. Itaque quo acrius et conferti magis utrimque pugnabant, eo plures vulnerabantur; nullo inter arma corporaque vano intercidente telo. Quum diu anceps fuisset certamen, et Saguntinis, quia præter spem resisterent, crevissent animi; Pœnus quia non vicisset pro victo esset; clamorem repente oppidani tollunt, hostemque in ruinas muri expellunt; inde impeditum trepidantemque exturbant; postremo fusum, fugatumque in castra redigunt."—Liv. l. xxi. c. 8, 9.

CHAP. LXI. guntum, already proved by the failure of two assaults to be all but impregnable, and to retreat would be to
1811. blow the whole of the east of Spain into a flame, and lose all the fruits of the fall of Taragona. Nor were the accounts from Catalonia and Aragon calculated to allay his fears as to the issue of the campaign. The long inactivity of the French troops around Figueras, had been attended with its usual effects in those warm latitudes. Sickness had spread to a frightful extent during the autumnal months; 10,000 men were in hospital; and the communication between Gerona and Barcelona was again entirely interrupted. Encouraged by the debility of the enemy's forces in the Ampurdan, and the absence of Suchet from the southern parts of the province, the unconquerable Catalans had again risen in arms.
Aug. 1811. Lacy had succeeded in re-organizing 8000 men under D'Erolles and Sarsfield, who were prosecuting a partisan warfare with indefatigable activity,—arms and ammunition having been furnished by the English. Busa, a mountain of great strength about twenty miles above Cardona among the Spanish Pyrenees, fixed on as their arsenal and seat of government, was already fortified and guarded by the militia of
Sept. 10. the country. Lacy was soon in a condition to resume offensive operations; he surprised Igualada,
Sept. 12. destroyed the French garrison, two hundred strong, captured an important convoy, compelled the enemy to evacuate Mont Serrat and retire to Taragona, levied contributions up to the gates of Barcelona, and even crossed the frontier, carrying devastation through the valleys on the French side of the Py-
Oct. 11. renees. Six hundred men were made prisoners at Cervera, two hundred at Bellpuig. Macdonald was
Oct. 14. recalled from a command in which he had earned no

addition to his laurels, and it was only by collecting a force of 14,000 infantry and 2000 horse that his successor Decaens was enabled to escort a convoy from Gerona to Barcelona.[1] CHAP. LXI. 1811.

[1] Tor. iv. 224, 230. Nap. iv. 276, 277.

The intelligence from upper Aragon was not less disquieting. The EMPECINADO, a noted guerilla chief, whose stronghold was the mountains near Guadalaxara, had united with Duran and other guerilla leaders; and their united force, consisting of six thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred horse, threatened Calatayud: MINA, another guerilla chief, with five thousand men, was threatening Aragon from the side of Navarre; and lesser partisans were starting up in every direction. Musnier's and Severole's division, indeed, numbering twelve thousand soldiers, succeeded in raising the siege of Calatayud; but Mina gained great successes in the western part of the provinces, pursued the flying enemy up to the gates of Saragossa, and totally destroyed twelve hundred Italians, who were following him in his retreat towards the mountains. Such was the local knowledge and skill of this incomparable partisan, that, though actively pursued by several bodies of the enemy much superior to his own troops, he succeeded in getting clear off with his prisoners, which were taken from his hands on the coast by the Iris frigate, and conveyed safe to Corunna. The road between Tortosa and Oropesa also, Suchet's principal line of communication, was entirely closed by lesser bands; and it was easy to see that if he either remained where he was without gaining decisive success, or fell back to the Ebro, he would be beset by a host of enemies who would speedily wrest from him all his conquests.[2]

Successes of the guerillas in Aragon.

Oct. 5.

Oct. 9.

[2] Suchet, ii. 192, 203. Tor. iv. 230, 239. Nap. iv. 278, 280.

From this hazardous situation, the French general

CHAP. LXI.

1811.

was relieved by the imprudent daring of the Spaniards themselves. Blake, who was no stranger to the formation of a practicable breach in the walls of Saguntum, and knew well that, notwithstanding their recent success, the brave garrison would in the end sink under a repetition of such attacks, was resolved that they should not perish under his eyes, as that of Taragona had done under those of Campoverde. He accordingly made preparations for battle, and for this purpose got together twenty-two thousand infantry, two thousand five hundred horse, and thirty-six guns. With this imposing force, after issuing a simple but touching proclamation to his troops, he set out from Valencia on the evening of the 24th October, and made straight for the French position under the walls of Saguntum. Suchet was overjoyed at the intelligence, which reached him at eleven at night; and immediately gave orders for stopping the enemy on his march, before he had arrived at the ground where he designed to give battle. With this view the French general drew up the whole force that he could spare from the siege, about seventeen thousand men, with thirty guns, in a pass about three miles broad, which extended from the heights of Vall de Jesus and Sancti Spiritus, to the sea; and through which the Spanish army behoved to pass, in approaching Saguntum from Valencia. The gunners were all left in the trenches; and in order to deceive the enemy, and deter them from attempting a sortie, they received orders to redouble their fire upon the breach. But notwithstanding this, the besieged from their elevated battlements descried the approaching succour, and with intense anxiety watched the progress of the advancing host.[1]

Advance of Blake to raise the siege.

Oct. 24.

1 Tor. iv. 217, 218. Nap. iv. 281, 282. Suchet, ii. 179, 181.

At eight o'clock on the following morning, the

Spanish army commenced the attack upon the French at all points, and soon drove in their light troops. Following up this advantage, they pressed on and won a height on the French right which commanded that part of the field, and established some guns there which did great execution. The whole Spanish left, encouraged by this success, advanced rapidly and with the confidence of success; their dense battalions were speedily seen crowning the heights on the French right; and the garrison of Saguntum, who crowded the ramparts, deeming the hour of deliverance at hand, already shouted victory and threw their caps in the air, regardless of the besiegers' fire, which never for an instant ceased to thunder on their walls. In truth, the crisis was full of danger, and a moment's hesitation on the general's part would have lost the day. Suchet instantly ordered up Harispe's division, which, after a severe struggle, regained the heights; and perceiving that Blake was extending his wings with a view to outflank his opponents, he brought up his second line, leaving the cuirassiers only in reserve, and made a vigorous attack on the Spanish centre. The first onset, however, proved utterly unsuccessful; the Spaniards, driven from the height, rallied behind their second line, and again advanced with the utmost intrepidity to retake it: Caro's dragoons overthrew the French cavalry in the plain at its foot; and not only was the hill again wrested from the infantry, but the guns planted on it fell into the enemy's hands. Every thing seemed lost, and would have been so, but for the valour and presence of mind of the French commander-in-chief; but he instantly flew to the reserve of cuirassiers, and addressing to them a few words of encouragement, in doing which he received a wound

Battle of Saguntum. Oct. 25.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

in the shoulder, himself led them on to the charge. They came upon the Spanish infantry, already somewhat disordered by success, at the very time when they were staggered by a volley in flank from the 116th regiment, which, inclining back to let the torrent pass which they could not arrest, at this critical moment threw in a close and well-directed fire. The onset of the terrible French cuirassiers, fresh and in admirable order, on the Spanish centre, proved irresistible: the Valencian horsemen, already blown and in disorder, were instantly overthrown; the infantry were broken and driven back: not only were the captured guns retaken, but the whole Spanish artillery in that part of the field seized, and the two wings entirely separated from each other. The French right at the same time succeeded in regaining the ground it had lost on the hills, and threw the Spanish left opposed to it in great confusion into the plain; their left also was advancing; and Blake, seeing the day lost, retired towards Valencia, with the loss of a thousand killed and wounded, and two thousand five hundred men, and twelve guns, taken. Suchet lost eleven hundred men in the action; but Blake's inability to contend with him in the field was now apparent; and so depressing was this conviction on the garrison of Saguntum, that they capitulated that night, though the breach was not yet practicable, and the garrison still two thousand five hundred strong, deeming it a useless effusion of blood to hold out longer, now that relief had become hopeless.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 180, 191. Tor. iv. 218, 221. Nap. iv. 285, 286. Vict. et Conq. 343, 349.

Though this important victory and acquisition gave the French general a solid footing in the kingdom of Valencia, he did not consider himself as yet in sufficient strength to undertake the siege of its capital, and the situation of Blake was far from being

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

desperate. His forces were still above twenty thousand men: he was master of an intrenched camp with a fortified town enclosed within its circuit; and the sea and harbour gave him unlimited means of obtaining reinforcements and supplies from the rear. Impressed with these ideas, as well as the serious character which the desultory warfare had assumed in Aragon and Catalonia in his rear, Suchet halted at Saguntum, and made the most pressing representations to Napoleon as to the necessity of reinforcements, before he could proceed farther in his enterprise. During six weeks that he remained quiescent at Saguntum, he was incessantly engaged in making preparations for the siege; while the Spaniards, who had all withdrawn behind the Guadalavier, were daily recruiting their numbers, and completing the arrangements for defence. Although, however, a great degree of enthusiasm prevailed among the people, yet nothing indicating a desperate resistance was attempted; and it was very evident that the Valencians, if shut up within their walls, would neither imitate the citizens of Numantium or Saragossa. Meanwhile, Suchet on two occasions had defeated powerful bodies of guerillas under Duran and Campillo, who were infesting the rear of the army: and at length, the divisions of Severole and Reille having, by command of the Emperor, been placed under his orders, and reached his headquarters, he prepared, in the beginning of December, with a force now augmented to 33,000 men, to complete the conquest of Valencia; and, for this purpose, pushed his advanced posts to the banks of the Guadalavier, so that the river alone separated the hostile armies.[1]

Delay of Suchet at Saguntum, till he receives reinforcements.

Nov. 7.

Nov. 23.

[1] Suchet, ii. 201, 213. Tor. iv. 269, 274. Vict. et Conq. xx. 351, 352. Nap. iv. 291.

By drawing considerable reinforcements from the troops in Murcia, Blake had augmented his army

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

to 22,000 men. He had broken down two out of the five stone bridges which crossed the river; the houses which commanded them on the south bank were occupied and loopholed; the city was surrounded by a circular wall thirty feet high and ten thick, but with a ditch and covered way only at the gates. Around this wall, about a mile farther out, was the rampart of the intrenched camp, five miles round, which enclosed the whole city and suburbs, and was defended by an earthen rampart, the front of which was so steep as to require to be ascended by scaling ladders, while a wet ditch ran along its front. But all history demonstrates that such preparations, how material soever to a brave and disciplined, are of little avail to a dejected or unwarlike array, if vigorously assailed by an enterprising enemy. In the night of the 25th December, 200 French hussars crossed the river several miles above the town, opposite the village of Ribaroya, by swimming their horses across, and put to flight the Spanish outposts. The engineers immediately began the construction of two bridges of pontoons for the infantry and artillery; and with such expedition were the operations conducted, and the troops moved across, that, before the Spaniards were well aware of their danger, or the movement which was in contemplation, Suchet himself, with the main body of his forces, and the whole of Reille's division, had not only crossed over, but, by a semicircular march, had got entirely round the Spanish intrenched camp, in such a manner as to cut off the retreat from the city towards Alicante and Murcia. It was precisely a repetition of the circular sweep by which Davoust, in 1805, had interposed between Ulm and Vienna, and cut off all chance of escape from its ill-fated

Suchet approaches and surrounds Valencia. Dec. 25.

Dec. 25.

garrison.* The French hussars fell in with the Spanish cavalry hurrying out of the city to stop their advance at Aldaya, several miles round, and to the south-west of the intrenched camp. They were overpowered in the first encounter, and General Broussand made prisoner; but soon rallying, as fresh troops came up, they regained their lost ground, delivered their general, and pursued their march. At the same time, the better to conceal his real design, Suchet caused Palombini with his division to cross the river a little farther down, and make for Mislata, and the westward of Valencia. The two divisions of Musnier and Habert, which were left on the other bank of the river, commenced a furious assault on the north of the intrenched camp. The roar of artillery was heard on all sides; the rattle of musketry seemed to envelope the city; and it was hard even for the most experienced general to say to which quarter succour required in the first instance to be conveyed.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 210, 216. Tor. iv. 273, 274. Nap. iv. 296, 297. Vict. et Conq. xx. 553, 554.

In the midst of all the tumult, however, the French marshal incessantly pressed on to the main object of his endeavours, which was to sweep round the whole southern side of the town, and interpose near the lake ALBUFERA, on the sea-coast, between Blake's army and the line of retreat to Alicante. So anxious was he to effect this object, that he put himself at the head of Harispe's division, which formed the vanguard of the force which had crossed the river at Ribaroya, and pressing constantly forward, overthrew all opposition, and never halted till he had reached the western margin of the lake, and had become entire master of the southern road. Meanwhile, the action continued with various success

The Spaniards are defeated, and thrown back into Valencia. Dec. 26.

* *Ante*, v. 398.

CHAP. LXI. 1811.

in other quarters; the leading brigades of Palombini's division, charged with the attack on Mislata, encountered so tremendous a fire from the Spanish infantry and redoubts that they fell back in utter confusion almost to the banks of the Guadalavier; but without being diverted by this check, fresh battalions crossed over, and following fast on the traces of Harispe, completed the sweep round the intrenched camp, and established the general-in-chief in such strength on its southern front, that he was in no danger of being cut off, and in condition to shift for himself. Deeming himself secure, Suchet at this critical moment ascended the steeple of the village of Chirivilla, to endeavour to ascertain by the line of smoke how the battle was proceeding in other quarters; and when there, he narrowly escaped being made prisoner by a Spanish battalion, which, in the general confusion, entered the village, then occupied only by a few horsemen and his own suite; and it was only by an impetuous charge of his aides-de-camp and personal attendants that the enemy, who were ignorant of the all-important prize within their grasp, were repulsed. General Habert, at the same time, not only drove the enemy from the northern bank, but throwing a bridge over the river, under cover of fifty pieces of cannon, below Valencia, passed over, amidst a terrible fire of cannon and musketry, and pushed his advanced posts on till they met, near the northern end of the lake of Albufera, those of Harispe, which had crossed above the town and completed its circuit on the southern side. Thus the investment of the place was completed; and so little had the victors suffered in this decisive operation that their loss did not exceed five hundred men. That of the Spaniards was not much greater, though they aban-

doned eighteen guns to the enemy; but they sustained irreparable damage by having their army entirely dislocated, and the greater part of it shut up, without the chance of escape, in Valencia, whither Blake, with seventeen thousand men, had taken refuge. The remainder broke off from the main body, and, fortunately for the independence of the Peninsula, succeeded in reaching Alicante, though in straggling bands, to the number of above four thousand men. It is a signal proof of the contempt which the French general must have entertained for his opponents, that he thus ventured to spread his troops in a circular sweep of more than fifteen miles in length, with their flank exposed the whole way, to the attacks of a concentrated enemy little inferior in number, in possession of an intrenched camp; and of the strong foundation for that contempt, that he succeeded in his design.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 214, 223. Tor. iv. 271, 279. Nap. iv. 297, 300. Vict. et Conq. xx. 353, 356.

The decisive effects of the investment of the intrenched camp and city of Valencia, were speedily apparent. A few days after, Blake, at the head of fifteen thousand men, endeavoured to force his way out of the town by the left bank of the Guadalavier; but though the column at first had some success, and drove in the enemy's advanced posts, yet Blake had not determination enough to enforce the only counsel which could extricate the troops from their perilous predicament; Lardizabal did not evince his usual energy in the advance; the advice of the heroic Zayas to press on at all hazards, sword in hand, was overruled; some difficulties at crossing the canals threw hesitation into the movements of the whole; and, after losing the precious minutes in vacillation, the Spanish general returned on his footsteps to Valencia; while his advanced guard, to whom the

Siege and fall of Valencia. Dec. 28.

CHAP. LXI.

1811. order to return could not be communicated, got safe off to the mountains. A similar attempt was made a few days after on the road to Alicante with no

Jan. 2, 1812. better success. Meanwhile, Suchet was commencing regular approaches; and on the night of the 5th, the

Jan. 5. Spanish general, despairing of defending the vast circuit of the intrenched camp with a depressed army and irresolute population, withdrew altogether from it, and retired into the city. The French, perceiving the retrograde movement, broke into the works, and pressed on the retiring enemy so hotly, that eighty pieces of heavy artillery, mounted on the redoubts, fell into their hands, and they immediately established themselves within twenty yards of the town wall. Rightly conjecturing that the resistance of the Spaniards would be more speedily subdued by the terrors of a bombardment than by breaching the rampart, Suchet immediately erected mortar batteries, and began to discharge bombs into the city. Blake at first refused to capitulate, when terms were offered by the French general. No preparations, however, had been made to stand a siege; the pavement had nowhere been lifted; no barricades were erected; there were no cellars or caves, as at Saragossa, for the besieged to retire into to avoid the fire; already some of the finest buildings in the city, particularly the noble libraries of the archbishop and university, had been reduced to ashes; and the impossibility of finding subsistence for a population of a hundred and fifty thousand souls besides the troops, as well as the desponding temper of the inhabitants, whose spirit was completely broken by the long train of disasters which had occurred in

Jan. 9. the east of Spain, soon convinced the Spanish general of the impossibility of holding out. After the bombardment had continued some days, therefore, and

the town had been set on fire in different places, he proposed to capitulate. His terms, however, were sternly rejected; and he at length, finding the majority of the inhabitants adverse to any further resistance, surrendered at discretion.[1] 1811.

[1] Tor. iv. 279, 289. Suchet, ii. 225, 230. Vict. et Conq. xx. 356, 364. Nap. iv. 300, 302. Jom. iii. 530, 531.

By the capture of Valencia, the French general, in addition to the richest, most populous, and most important city of the Peninsula next to Cadiz, that remained still unsubdued, became master of sixteen thousand regular troops, the best in Spain, who were made prisoners; besides three hundred and ninety pieces of cannon, thirty thousand muskets, two thousand cavalry and artillery horses, twenty-one standards, and immense military stores of all kinds. Seldom has a greater blow been struck in modern war: it was like that delivered by the English, when they stormed the fortress of Seringapatam. The Spanish army marched out on the 10th of January, and, having laid down their arms, were immediately sent off to France. The elements of resistance still existed in the province: Alicante was still unsubdued; no hostile troops had approached the plains of Murcia, and the mountain range which separated it from New Castile swarmed with active and resolute guerillas. But all unity of purpose, or regular government, was destroyed among the patriot bands by the fall of the capital; the desultory warfare gradually died away, or was confined to the neighbourhood of the mountains; and the rich and beautiful plain of Valencia, the garden of Spain, the scene which poetic rapture sought in vain to enhance, with all its immense resources, fell entirely under the French power, and was immediately turned to the best account by the vigorous administration and oppressive impositions of Marshal Suchet. Order was completely preserved, discipline

Immense result of this conquest.

Jan. 10.

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

rigorously maintained; but all the most energetic characters, especially among the clergy, on the side of independence, nearly fifteen hundred in number, were arrested and sent to France, and some hundreds of them shot when unable from fatigue to travel farther; the perpetrators of the disgraceful murders which had stained the commencement of the war justly executed, while an enormous contribution brought into the Imperial coffers all that was rescued from private rapacity. On the war-wasted city and province of Valencia, at the close of four oppressive and burdensome campaigns, the French marshal imposed a contribution of fifty millions of francs, or two millions sterling, equivalent to five or six millions on a small portion of England; and such was the skill which long experience had given the officers of the Imperial army in extracting its utmost resources from the most exhausted country, that this enormous impost was brought, with very little deduction, into the public treasury.[1]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 364, 365. Tor. iv. 288, 291. Suchet, ii. 231, 232.

Complete subjugation of the province. Feb. 5.

The subjugation of Valencia was soon after completed by the reduction of the little fort of Peniscola; which, after a short siege, capitulated, with seventy-four pieces of cannon and a thousand men, in the beginning of February. This conquest was of importance, as completing the pacification of the whole province, and clearing of all molestation the road from Tortosa. Encouraged by the easy reduction of this stronghold, Monbrun, with his cuirassiers and horse artillery, who had been detached, by Napoleon's orders, from Marmont's army to act against Valencia, presented himself before Alicante, and began to throw bombs from a few pieces into the town. This ludicrous attempt at a bombardment, however, only had the effect of accelerating the preparations for defence,

Jan. 29.

which were now made in good earnest, and with such effect that the French general retired from before its walls towards Madrid, where his presence was loudly called for by the menacing attitude of the English on the Portuguese frontier. Alicante, meanwhile, daily beheld its defenders strengthened by the arrival of the broken bands who had escaped the wreck of Valencia; a powerful English force, some months afterwards, from Sicily landed within its walls, and this city shared, with Cadiz and Carthagena, the glory of being the only Spanish cities which had never been sullied by the presence of the enemy.[1]

[1] Suchet, ii. 234, 236. Tor. iv. 293. Vict. et Conq. xx. 366.

Justly desirous of giving a public mark of his high sense of the great services rendered to his empire by Marshal Suchet and his brave companions in arms, Napoleon, by a decree dated the moment that he received intelligence of the fall of Valencia, bestowed on the former the title of Duke of Albufera, the scene of his last and most decisive triumph, with the rich domains attached to it in the kingdom of Valencia; on the latter an extraordinary donation of two hundred millions francs, or L.8,000,000 sterling. These immense funds were directed to be realized "from our extraordinary domain in Spain, and such parts thereof as are situated in the kingdom of Valencia," and afford a striking example of the system of extortion and spoliation which the Emperor invariably put in force in all the territories which he conquered. But the hour of retribution had arrived: the English armies on the Portuguese frontier were about to commence their immortal career; Russia was preparing for the decisive conflict; and their remained only to Suchet and his descendants the barren title which bespoke the scene of his triumph and his glory.[1]

Honours and rewards bestowed on Suchet and his troops. Jan. 24.

[1] Suchet, ii. 236. Vict. et Conq. xx. 366, 367.

There is no passage in the later history of Napo-

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

leon which is more worthy of study than the campaigns of Suchet, which have now been considered. Independent of the attention due to the military actions of a general, whom that consummate commander has pronounced the greatest of his captains,[1] there is enough in the annals of his exploits to attract the notice and admiration even of the ordinary historian, who pretends to nothing but a general acquaintance with military affairs. In the other campaigns of the French generals, especially in later times, the interest felt in the individual commander is often weakened by the perception of the magnitude of the force at his disposal, or its obvious superiority in discipline and equipment to the enemy with which it had to contend; and the Emperor himself, in particular, hardly ever took the field, from the time when he mounted the Imperial throne till he was reduced to a painful defensive struggle in the plains of Champagne, but at the head of such a force as at once ensured victory and rendered opposition hopeless. But in the case of Suchet, equally with that of Napoleon himself in the Italian campaign of 1796, or the French one of 1814, no such disproportion of force existed; the resources of the contending parties were very nearly balanced; and it was in the superior fortitude and ability of the victorious general that the real secret of his success is to be found. If the Imperial commander was at the head of a body of men, superior in discipline, equipment, military prowess, and numbers, so far as real soldiers are concerned, to the Spanish generals; these advantages, how great soever, were compensated, and perhaps more than compensated, by the rugged and inaccessible fastnesses of which the greater part of Catalonia is composed; the absence of any practicable

Reflections on these campaigns of Suchet.

[1] Las. Cas. ii. 11. O'Meara, i. 492.

road through them; the number and strength of their fortified towns, the indomitable spirit and patriotic ardour of the inhabitants, and the vast resources at their command, from the vicinity of the sea and the succour of the English navy. No one who studies these campaigns can doubt that these circumstances counterbalanced the superior discipline and prowess of the French army in the field; that the issue of the contest thus came to be mainly dependent on the comparative talents of the two generals; and that if their relative positions in this respect had been reversed, and Suchet had been at the head of the Spanish, and Campoverde or Blake of the French forces, the result would in all probability have been the entire defeat of the Imperial power in the east of the Peninsula. And in the inexhaustible mental resources of the French general, his fortitude in difficulty, presence of mind in danger, and the admirable decision with which, in critical moments, he abandoned all minor considerations to concentrate his whole force on the main object of the campaign, is to be found the real secret of his glorious successes, as of all the most illustrious deeds recorded in history.

Painful reflections on the conduct of England in this part of Spain.

For the same reason, there is no period of the Peninsular war which an English historian feels so much pain in recounting, as that of this gallant but abortive struggle in the east of Spain. When we reflect on the noble stand which the province of Catalonia, aided only by transient succours from Valencia, made against the armies of two French marshals, who numbered 70,000 admirable troops, in possession of the principal fortresses of the country, under their banners; when we recollect how equally the scales of fortune hung on several

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

occasions, and with what decisive effect even a small reinforcement of regular troops, happily thrown in, would unquestionably have had on the issue of the contest; it is not without the bitterest feelings of regret that we call to mind, that, at that very moment, 12,000 English soldiers lay inactive in Sicily, an island effectually defended by our fleets alone from foreign invasion, and within only a few days' sail of the scene of conflict. Had half this force been landed in Catalonia previous to the siege of Tortosa, the French general would never have approached its walls. Had it been added to the defenders of the breaches of Taragona, the French grenadiers would have been hurled headlong from its ramparts. Had it even come up to the rescue under the towers of Saguntum, the Imperial eagles would have retreated with shame from the invasion of Valencia; and the theatre of the first triumphs of Hannibal might have been that of the commencement of Napoleon's overthrow. If we recollect that the capture of Valencia in the east of Spain was contemporaneous with the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo in the west, and that the extinction of regular warfare in one part of the Peninsula, occurred at the very moment when a career of decisive victories was commencing in another, it is difficult to over-estimate the importance to the general issue of the contest which would have arisen from such a happy addition of British succour as would have kept alive the conflagration in a quarter where it was already burning so fiercely, and prevented that concentration of the enemy's force against Wellington, in the close of 1812, which wellnigh wrested from him the whole fruits of the Salamanca campaign.

But it is still more painful to recollect that English

succour was at hand when the last stronghold of Catalonian independence was torn by overwhelming force from the arms of freedom; that the warriors of the power which had seen the conquerors of Egypt and the fortunes of Napoleon recoil from the bastions of Acre, beheld secure from their ships the grenadiers of Suchet mount the breach of Taragona; and that, when the garrison of Saguntum saw their last hopes expire by the defeat of the army at their feet, British ships received by signal the intelligence, and the conquerors of Maida, within a few days' sail, might have snatched their laurels from the victors. We have a mournful satisfaction in recounting the horrors of the Corunna retreat: we dwell with exultation on the carnage of Albuera; for that suffering was endured and that blood was shed in a noble cause, and England then worthily shared with her allies the dangers of the contest; but to relate that Taragona fell unaided when the English banners were in sight, that deeds of heroism were done, and England though near was not there—this is indeed humiliation, this is truly national dishonour. And under the influence of this feeling, it is not only without regret, but with a sense of justice which amounts to satisfaction, that the subsequent disgrace of the British arms before the walls of Taragona will be recounted;[1] for it was fitting that on the one and only spot in the Peninsula where deeds unworthy of her name had been done, the one and only stain on her fame should be incurred.*

[1] Vide infra, c. lxiii.

* These observations are made in a national view, and for national objects only. No reflection is intended either on the naval and military officers engaged, who had scarcely a land force at their disposal adequate to the rude encounter which awaited them with the French veterans who crowded round the breach of Taragona, and who did offer, though in a desponding way, to put their force, slender as it was, at the disposal of the Spanish governor. The chief blame rests with the

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

Causes of the weakness of the English Government in 1811.

In truth, even a cursory record of the campaign of 1811 must be sufficient to convince every impartial observer that a political paralysis had, to a certain extent, come to affect the British Government, and that the Cabinet was far from being directed during that year by the firm and unshrinking hands which had hitherto held the reins. Nor is it difficult to discover to what cause this change is to be ascribed. The year 1811 was, as already noticed,* one of extraordinary distress in England—the exports and imports taken together had sunk, as compared with the preceding year, no less than thirty-six millions; the revenue had declined by above two millions; while the universal and poignant distress among the manufacturing classes, in consequence of the simultaneous operation of the continental system and the American Non-intercourse Act, rendered the contraction of any considerable loan, or the imposition of fresh taxes of any amount, a matter of extreme difficulty. Add to this, the enormous expenditure consequent in the beginning of the year and the close of the preceding one, on the vast accumulation of soldiers in the lines of Torres Vedras, and the unparalleled drain of specie which had taken place from the necessity of supplying the warlike multitude, which had not only wellnigh exhausted the treasure of the country, but necessarily crippled all active operations on the part of the English generals in the Peninsula.

But, notwithstanding the weight justly due to these circumstances, a more minute examination of the state of parties at that period will demonstrate that it was

Administration, who had not discernment enough in military affairs to see that Taragona was the vital point of the war in the east of Spain, and that the whole force we possessed in the Mediterranean should have been directed to its support.

* *Ante*, viii. 62.

not to them alone, nor even chiefly, that the languid operations of the English on the east of Spain, during this momentous year, are to be ascribed. Wellington had clearly pointed out the important advantages which must accrue to the French from the fall of Valencia; both from the concentration of all their force against himself, which it would enable the Imperial generals to make; the resources which would await Suchet, and could immediately be rendered available in the province; and the disinclination which the grandees at Cadiz, having estates in the east of Spain, would in consequence probably feel towards any further prosecution of the war.* That the British Ministry were fully alive to these considerations, and prepared to act upon them as soon as they felt themselves secure in their offices, is proved by the considerable expeditions which, when equally hard pressed for money, they sent to Alicante from Sicily, in June 1812;[1] and which, though not conducted with any remarkable ability, effectually stopped the progress of the French in the east of the

Insecure tenure Government had of their offices the great cause of the inefficient aid of England in this campaign.

[1] Infra, ch. lxiii.

* "The loss of Valencia would be of great importance: the greater part of the grandees of Spain have estates in that province, upon the revenues of which they have subsisted since they have lost every thing else elsewhere. It may be expected, therefore, that the loss of this kingdom will induce many to wish to submit to the French yoke. The probability that the fall of Valencia would immediately follow the loss of Taragona, was the cause of the ferment at Cadiz in the beginning of last summer. Though Blake has found no resources in that province, the French will find in Valencia the resources of money and provisions of which they stand so much in need. This conquest will enable the enemy to concentrate their forces. Even if Suchet should be unable to press on farther to the south of Valencia, and Soult should be unable to communicate with him through Murcia, Suchet will be enabled to communicate by a former route that he formerly possessed with the armies of the centre and of Portugal; and his army will be disposable to support the armies of the north and Portugal opposed to us."—WELLINGTON *to the* EARL of LIVERPOOL, *4th December* 1811. GURWOOD, viii. 421, 422.

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

Peninsula. The supineness with which, in the course of 1811, they permitted a much fairer opportunity of effecting this great object to escape, is to be ascribed chiefly to the insecure tenure by which they then held the reins of power, and the determined and impassioned resistance which the Opposition, their probable successors, had invariably made to its continuance.* The Prince Regent, as already noticed,† had assumed the reins of power, upon the incapacity of his father, in February 1811; and, though he had continued the ministers in their several offices, yet he had done so on the distinct explanation that he was actuated solely by a desire, while the reigning monarch had any chance of recovery, not to thwart his principles, or choice of public servants; and it was well understood that, as soon as the restrictions expired in February 1812, he would send for the Whig leaders, which, in point of fact, he immediately did. The knowledge of this precarious tenure of their power, not only disheartened Government from any fresh or extraordinary efforts in a cause which they had every reason to believe was so soon to be abandoned by the succeeding administration, but weakened to a most extraordinary degree their majority in the House of Commons, which, in general, during that interregnum did not exceed twenty or thirty votes.‡

* "The Government are terribly afraid that I shall get them and myself into a scrape. But what can be expected from men who are beaten three times a-week in the House of Commons? A great deal might be done if there existed in England less party and more public sentiment, and if there was any government."—WELLINGTON *to* ADMIRAL BERKELEY, *April* 7, 1810; GURWOOD, vi. 21.

† *Ante*, viii. 32.

‡ On the Regency question on January 21, 1811—a vital question to Ministers—the majority was only twenty-two, in a remarkably full house of 402 members; and Mr Vansittart's resolutions on the Bullion Report, a still more important division, only forty.—*See Parl. Deb.* xviii. 973; *and* xx. 128.

The Opposition were so inveterate against the Spanish war, that not only did they declaim against it in the most violent manner on all occasions, both in and out of Parliament; but, if we may believe the contemporary authority of Berthier, actually corresponded during the most critical period of the contest with Napoleon himself, and furnished him with ample details on the situation of the English army, and the circumstances which would, in all likelihood, defeat its exertions.* It is not surprising that a ministry thus powerfully thwarted, destitute of any members versed in military combination, with a very scanty majority in Parliament, and no support farther than the cold assent of duty from the throne, should, during this critical year, have shrunk from the responsibility of implicating the nation, on a more extended scale, in a contest of doubtful issue

* "L'intention bien formelle de l'Empereur, est au mois de Septembre (1811) apres la récolte, de combiner un mouvement, avec l'armée du midi, un corps de l'armée du centre, et votre armée, pour culbuter les Anglais, et jusqu'a cette époque, que vous devez agir de manière qu'aucun corps ennemi ne puisse tenir la campagne. Nous sommes parfaitement instruits par les Anglais, et beaucoup mieux que vous ne l'êtes. L'Empereur lit les journaux de Londres, *et chaque jour un grand nombre des lettres de l'Opposition*, dont quelques-unes accusent Lord Wellington, et parlent en detail de vos operations. L'Angleterre tremble pour son armée d'Espagne, et Lord Wellington a toujours été en grande crainte de vos operations."—BERTHIER, Major-General, au Marèchal MASSENA, Prince d'Essling, *Paris, 29 Mars* 1811.—BELMAS, *Journaux des Sieges dans la Peninsule*, i. 495, 496.

The "extempore correspondence" which is here stated to have gone on between Napoleon and the English Opposition, took place in March 1811; that is, when Massena lay at Santarem, and Wellington at Cartaxo, the most critical period of the campaign and the war. Notwithstanding the high authority on which the existence of this correspondence is asserted, it is impossible to believe that it took place with any of the leaders of the Opposition; but it shows with what a spirit the party, generally speaking, must have been actuated on this subject, when any, even the lowest of their number, could, at such a moment, resort to communication with the mortal enemy of their country.

CHAP. LXI. 1812.

even under the most favourable circumstances, which was, to all appearance, to be abandoned as hopeless by their successors.

Surprising result of these circumstances on the ultimate fate of Napoleon.

And yet, so little can even the greatest sagacity or the strongest intellect foresee the ultimate results of human actions, and so strangely does Providence work out its mysterious designs by the intervention of free agents, and the passions often of a diametrically opposite tendency of mankind, that if there are any circumstances more than others to which the immediate catastrophe which occasioned the fall of Napoleon is to be ascribed, it is the unbroken triumphs of Suchet in the east, and the strenuous efforts of the English Opposition to magnify the dangers, and underrate the powers of Wellington in the west of the Peninsula. Being accustomed to measure the chances of success in a military contest by the achievements of the regular troops employed, and an entire stranger to the passions and actions of parties in a free community, he not unreasonably concluded, when the last army of Spain capitulated in Valencia, and the whole country, from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, had, with the exception of a few mountain districts, submitted to his authority, that the contest in the Peninsula was at an end, so far as the Spaniards were concerned; and when he beheld the party in Great Britain, who had all along denounced the war there as utterly hopeless, and irrational on the part of this country, and some of whom, in their zeal against its continuance and to demonstrate its absurdity, had actually corresponded with himself, even at the crisis of the contest, on the eve of getting possession of the reins of power in London; he was naturally led to believe that no cause for disquiet existed, in consequence of the

future efforts of England in Spain. He was thus tempted to prosecute, without hesitation, his preparations for the Russian war; and, before finishing the conflict in the Peninsula, plunge into the perils of the Moscow campaign, and the double strain it was, as he has himself told us, which proved fatal to the empire.* Had he been less successful in the east of Spain—had the English Opposition less strenuously asserted the impolicy and hopelessness of British resistance in the west, he would probably have cleared his rear before engaging with a new enemy in front. Neither could have withstood his whole force if directed against itself alone; and the concentration of all his military power against Wellington in the first instance, would have chilled all hopes of success in Russia, and extinguished, perhaps for ever, the hopes of European freedom. So manifestly does Supreme power make the passions and desires of men the instruments by which it carries into effect its inscrutable purposes, that the very events which vice most strenuously contends for, are made the ultimate causes of its ruin; and those which virtue had most earnestly deprecated when they occurred, are afterwards found to have been the unseen steps which led to its salvation.

* "Cette malheureuse guerre d'Espagne," said Napoleon, "a été une veritable plaie; la cause première des malheurs de la France. L'Angleterre s'est fait une armée dans la Peninsule, et de-là elle est devenue l'agent victorieux, le nœud redoubtable des toutes les intrigues, qui en peu se forment sur le Continent—*C'est ce qui m'a perdu.*"—LAS CASES, iv. 205.

CHAPTER LXII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1811 ON THE PORTUGUESE FRONTIER.

ARGUMENT.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Wellington's reasons for undertaking the Siege of Badajoz—Comparative view of the Contending Forces at this period—Forces on the side of the Allies—And on that of the French—General causes which led to Wellington's success—His central Position in the Peninsula—Advantages which the English enjoyed from the command of the Navigable Rivers—And of the general interruptions of the French communications by the Guerillas—Hatred of the French—Its great effect on the War—Jealousy and Discord of the rival French powers in the Peninsula—Discord of the Marshals among each other—Desperate Hostility produced by the cruelty of the French—Difference between the English plunder and the French exactions—Dreadful severity of the French Military Decrees—General Partisan Resistance which this Oppression produced—And extraordinary Difficulties in which it involved the French—Wellington's difficulties—Corruption and Imbecility of the Portuguese Administration—Imbecility with which the Regency at Lisbon discharged their Duty—Wretched conduct of the Spanish Troops, and Jealousy of their Generals—Extreme penury of the English Army in Money during these Campaigns—And Wellington's suffering from it—Foundation for Wellington's complaints on this Subject—Uniform neglect by the British of Warlike preparation in time of Peace—Universal inexperience of inferior Functionaries—Causes which led to these obstacles to Wellington's success—The British difficulties were the greatest in the beginning—The French in the end—Commencement of the first Siege of Badajoz—Force of the Opposing Armies at Albuera—Description of the Field of Battle—And the French and English position—Battle of Albuera—The French accumulate their Forces on the British right, and force the Spanish position—Dreadful disaster of the British Division which first got up—Gallant Attempt to retrieve the day by Houghton's Brigade—The British at the summit begin to fail—Gallant charge of the Fusilier Brigade recovers the day—Heroic Gallantry of the English Infantry—Conclusion of the Battle—Its results—Wellington arrives, and takes the command of the Siege of Badajoz—Moral results of the Battle—Renewal of the Siege of Badajoz—Second Assault on Christoval, which is repulsed—Measures of Napoleon to Raise the Siege—His Defensive Preparations through the whole of the North of Spain—Wellington Raises the Siege, and retires into Portugal—Entry of Marmont and Soult into Badajoz—Wellington takes post on the Caja—Soult and Marmont decline fighting, and separate—Operations of Blake and Ballasteros in Andalusia—Fatal Rout of the Spaniards at Baza in Murcia—Rise and rapid Progress of the

Insurrection in the Northern Provinces—Operations of the Insurgents in them—Napoleon's new Dispositions in Spain—Wellington's movement to the North of Portugal—Defeat of the Galicians on the Esla—Wellington's measures for the Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo—Grounds of hope for a successful Enterprise against that Fortress—Project of Napoleon for invading the Alentejo by Soult and Marmont—Wellington turns the Siege into a Blockade—French approach to raise the Siege—Approach of the two Armies to Ciudad Rodrigo, which is re-victualled—Combat of Elbodon—Heroic steadiness of Colville's brigade—Imminent danger of the British Army at Fuente Guinaldo—Both Armies go into Cantonments—Courtesy shown on both sides during these Operations—Re-occupation of Asturias by Bonnet—And Concentration of the French Forces at Valladolid and Burgos—Surprise of Gerard at Aroyos di Molinos—Total Defeat of the French—Improvement of the health of the British Army in their Cantonments—French Expedition against Tariffa, which Fails—Second Expedition against and Siege of Tariffa—Defeat of the Assault, and Raising of the Siege—General Results of the Campaign—The British Government and Army learn their own deficiencies during its Progress—Napoleon's real Intentions at this Period in regard to the War in Portugal.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

WHEN the retreat of Massena from Torres Vedras had delivered the realm protected by Wellington from the Imperial yoke, and the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro had destroyed his hopes of retaining a permanent footing within the Portuguese frontier,* Wellington's eyes were immediately turned towards Badajoz, the loss of which he justly considered as not only perpetually endangering the west of the Peninsula, but as by far the greatest calamity which had happened to the Allies since Napoleon had taken Madrid. For, though not belonging to the first rank, either from wealth or population, this renowned fortress was of the very highest importance, from its great strength and important situation on the Estremadura frontier—at once forming a base for the operations of an invading army, which should threaten Lisbon on its most defenceless side, that of the Alentejo, and the strongest link in the iron girdle which was to restrain Wellington from pushing his incursions into the Spanish territory. While Ciudad Rodrigo and

Wellington's reasons for undertaking the siege of Badajoz.

* *Ante*, vii. 875, 880.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Badajoz remained in the enemy's hands it was equally impossible for Wellington to feel any confidence in the safety of Portugal, or undertake any serious enterprise for the deliverance of Spain. The vast importance of fortresses in war, overlooked or forgotten amidst the unparalleled multitudes who overspread the plains of Europe during the latter years of the revolutionary war, was fully appreciated and clearly expressed by the greatest masters in the art of war it produced—Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington.*

Comparative view of the contending powers at this period.

As the first siege of Badajoz by the English, and its immediate consequence, the battle of Albuera, are the true commencement of the deliverance of the Peninsula, and of that surprising series of victories by which the French were, in two campaigns, stripped of all their conquests in Spain, and driven across the Pyrenees by an army which could not bring a third of their disposable forces into the field; it is of the highest importance to obtain a clear conception of the relative position of the contending parties at this eventful period, and of the causes which contributed to the production of so extraordinary an event.

* "The loss of Badajoz I consider as by far the greatest misfortune which has befallen us since the commencement of the Peninsular war." —WELLINGTON.

"Had it not been for the fortresses in Flanders," says Napoleon, "the reverses of Louis XIV. would have occasioned the fall of Paris. The Prince Eugene of Savoy lost a campaign in besieging Lille: the siege of Landrecy gave occasion to Villars to bring about a change of fortune: a hundred years after, in 1793, at the time of the treason of Dumourier, the strong places of Flanders again saved Paris: the Allies lost a campaign in taking Conde, Valenciennes, Quesnoy, and Landrecy: that line of fortresses was equally useful in 1814; and in 1815, if they had been in a condition of defence, and not affected by the political events at Paris, they could have stopped, till the German armies came up, the Anglo-Prussian army on the banks of the Somme."—NAPOLEON. *Memoirs in* MONTHOLON, i. 292.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

The British and Portuguese forces in Portugal, nominally above eighty thousand strong, could seldom (from the extremely reduced state of the Portuguese regiments after the French retreat from Torres Vedras, and the vast number of English sick who encumbered the hospitals—the result chiefly of the invariable unhealthiness of fresh regiments when first taking the field, and of the seeds of permanent disease which many of them brought with them from the Walcheren marshes) number above fifty thousand men fit for actual service. ' The strong bond of patriotism which had, during the invasion of their country, held the Portuguese troops to their standards, had been sensibly weakened since the last French columns had receded from their frontiers; and though the extraordinary fatigues of the pursuit did not at the time disable a large proportion of the troops, yet when they were over, and stationary habits began to co-exist with hot weather, the number of sick became so excessive, that in the beginning of October 1811, above twenty-five thousand British and Portuguese troops were in hospital: of whom upwards of nineteen thousand were English soldiers. And such was the desertion or sickness among the Portuguese at the commencement of Wellington's offensive campaign, that while thirty thousand stood on the rolls of the regiments for British pay, not more than fourteen thousand could be collected round the standards of the English general.'*

Forces on the side of the Allies.

Wellington to Lord Liverpool. July 18, 1811. Gurw. viii. 111.

On the other hand, the French force at that period in the Peninsula, amounted to the enormous number of three hundred and seventy thousand men, of whom forty thousand were cavalry; and of this

Forces of the French.

* See note A, Appendix.—Nap. iv. 586.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

number two hundred and eighty thousand were present with the eagles. A considerable part of this immense host, indeed, was actively engaged under Macdonald and Suchet in Catalonia, or was necessarily absorbed in keeping up the vast line of communication from the Pyrenees to Cadiz: but still the disposable amount of the troops which could be brought into the field from the three armies of the north, of Portugal, and of the south, were nearly triple those which the English general could command, and they seemed to render any offensive operation on his part utterly hopeless. Soult's forces, in Andalusia and the southern part of Estremadura, on the 1st of October, were eighty-eight thousand men, including ten thousand cavalry, of whom sixty-seven thousand were present with the eagles: Marmont, in Leon, had sixty-one thousand under his banners, of whom above forty-one thousand infantry, and ten thousand horse, were in the field: Joseph, in the centre, had twenty-two thousand French troops, of whom seventeen thousand could take the field, besides nearly an equal number of Spaniards around Madrid, the greater part of whom could in case of need be joined to the columns of Marmont: while the army of the north, under Marshal Bessieres, and subsequently General Caffarelli, amounted to the enormous number of a hundred and two thousand men, of whom seventy-seven thousand foot and eleven thousand horse were present with the eagles. In addition to this, reinforcements to the amount of eighteen thousand men were on their march, who actually entered Navarre in August and September of this year; so that the united force to which the British were opposed in the autumn of 1811, was not less than two hundred and forty thou-

sand men actually in the field.* Supposing a hundred thousand of this immense force to have been absorbed in guarding the fortresses, and keeping up the communications, which probably was the case, there would have remained a hundred and forty thousand men, who, by a combined effort, might have been brought to bear against Wellington, without relinquishing any other part of Spain, or nearly triple the force which he could by possibility oppose to them.† And these were not raw conscripts or inferior troops, but the very flower of the Imperial legions, led by the best marshals of the empire, comprising that intermixture of the steadiness of veterans with the fire of young troops, which, it is well known, is most favourable to military success, and who proved themselves capable, at Albuera, Badajoz, and Salamanca, of the most heroic exploits.[1]‡

[1] Imperial Muster Rolls. Nap. iv. 588, 589, taken at Vittoria. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 18, 1811. Gurw. viii. 109, 112.

When the magnitude and composition of this force are taken into consideration, and it is recollected that, from the entire extinction of any regular Spanish force in the provinces which it occupied, no serious diversion was to be expected from their exertions,

General causes which led to Wellington's success.

* Viz. Present with the eagles:—

Soult,	67,000
Marmont,	51,000
Joseph,	17,000
Bessieres,	88,000
Reinforcements,	17,000
	240,000

† This calculation coincides with that of Soult, made at the time in a letter to Joseph, even after twenty thousand men had been lost to France by the battle of Salamanca. "If your Majesty should collect the army of Aragon, the army of Portugal, and that of the centre, and march upon Andalusia, 120,000 men will be close to Portugal." This was, without any part of the immense army of the north, full sixty thousand strong, of whom thirty thousand at least were disposable.—SOULT *to* JOSEPH, *August* 19, 1812, *taken at Vittoria.*—*See* NAP. v. 236.

‡ See note B, Appendix.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

whatever partial annoyance the guerilla parties might occasion—when we call to mind that all the fortresses in the kingdom, with the exception of Cadiz and Alicante, were in the possession of the French generals; that the whole resources of the country were in their hands, and levied with merciless severity for the use of the troops, who were thus entirely taken off the Imperial treasury; and that the whole conflict was under the immediate direction of a ruler unparalleled in the ability with which he always brought his vast resources to bear on the vital point of the campaign; it becomes an object of the highest interest to enquire how it was that the British were in a condition to maintain their ground at all, in the Peninsula, against such overwhelming multitudes; and still more, how it happened that, laying aside the defensive, they were enabled to dislodge this vast array from the whole strongholds of the country, and finally to drive them, like chaff before the wind, over the Pyrenees into the south of France. Such an enquiry cannot be satisfactorily answered by merely referring to the military talents of Wellington, and the extraordinary gallantry of his followers; for, granting their full weight to these certainly most important elements in the contest, they could not effect an impossibility, which the discomfiture of such a host by so small a body of assailants would at first sight appear. Experience, as Wellington himself remarked, has "never, at least in later times, realized the stories which all have read, of whole armies being driven by a handful of light infantry and dragoons;" and even the most sincere believer in the direction of human affairs by a Supreme power, cannot doubt that, humanly speaking, there is much truth in Moreau's assertion, that "Providence favours

the strong battalions." There must, it is evident, have been some causes, in addition to the bravery of the English troops, which brought about this marvellous deliverance; and it is in their discovery that the great usefulness and highest aim of history are to be found. Such an enquiry can form no detraction from the merits of the British hero: on the contrary, it will lead to their highest exaltation; for no great revolutions in human affairs can be brought about but by the concurring operation of many general causes; and it is in the perception of the incipient operations of these causes, when hidden from the ordinary eye, and contrary to those operating on the surface, and their steady direction to noble purposes, that the highest effort of military or political intellect is to be found. 1811.

His central position in the Peninsula.

I. The first circumstance which gave an advantage to Wellington, and compensated in some degree the vast superiority of the enemy's force, was his central situation, midway between the widely scattered stations of the French generals, and the powerful citadel, stored with all the muniments of war, and resting on that true base of British military operation, the sea, which lay in his rear. Grouped at the distance of two hundred miles from the ocean, on either bank of the Tagus, with a secure retreat by converging lines to the strong position of Torres Vedras, ascertained, by dear-bought experience, to be all but impregnable, the English troops were in a situation to threaten either Ciudad Rodrigo and the forces of Marmont in the north, or Badajoz and the vanguard of Soult in the southern parts of the Peninsula. At the time when they were most widely severed from each other, the forces of Beresford or Hill in Estremadura,

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

and Wellington himself in Beira or on the Agueda, were not distant by more than sixty or seventy miles, and could, if hard pressed, unite in a few days; whereas the French troops, after the occupation of Andalusia, were scattered over an immense line, more than five hundred miles in length, from the mountains of Asturias to the ramparts of Cadiz, and nearly two months must elapse before they could combine in any common operations. The force under Marmont, immediately in front of Wellington, was not superior to his own army in strength; and its means of obtaining subsistence, and keeping considerable bodies of men together, were, from the desert nature of the plains of Leon, much inferior: thus, by uniting with Beresford on the south of the Tagus, or calling him to his own standard on the north, he had a fair chance of striking a serious blow before the distant succour could be collected to avert it from the banks of the Douro or the Guadalquivir. It was by a similar advantage of a central position between his widely separated enemies, that Frederick the Great so long resisted, on the sands of Prussia, the distant armies of Austria and Russia converging from the Vistula and the Elbe; that Napoleon, on the banks of the Adige and in the plains of Champagne, so successfully warded off the redoubtable blows prepared for him by the slow tenacity of the Austrian councils; and that the consul Nero, in the second Punic war, effected the deliverance of Italy, and changed the fate of the world, by taking advantage of the interior line of communication which separated the forces of Hannibal in Apulia from those of his brother Hasdrubal on the banks of the Po.*

* See note C, Appendix.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

II. The circumstances of the British armies in respect of supplies afforded another advantage to the English general, of which he did not fail to avail himself, and in regard to which he was much more favourably situated than his antagonist. The country from Madrid to the Portuguese frontier, and especially towards the Alentejo, was reduced by the devastations and grinding contributions of the French armies to an almost continuous desert; the peasants had for the most part abandoned their possessions, and joined the guerilla parties, with which all the mountain ridges abounded,* deeming it better to plunder others than be plundered themselves; and to such a pitch had their penury arisen, that the Imperial generals were, in all the provinces, under the necessity of sending to France, in spring 1811, for seed corn, to prevent agriculture from becoming altogether extinct.† The consequence was, that the French armies approaching the Portuguese frontier either from the south or the north, were unable to keep together in large bodies for any considerable time; and whether the object for which they were assembled had failed or been accomplished, they were equally compelled to separate into distant and widely separated provinces, to seek the means of subsistence. They were

Advantages of the English from the command of the navigable rivers.

* "The whole country between Madrid and the Alentejo is now a desert, and a still smaller proportion of land than before has been cultivated this winter. The argument of the people of the country is, that it is better to rob than to sow and have the produce of their harvests taken from them; and the French begin to find, that they cannot keep their large armies together for any operation which will take time, and that, when we can reach them, they can do nothing with small bodies." —WELLINGTON *to* LORD LIVERPOOL, *4th December* 1811.—GURWOOD, viii. 422.

† "Famine had made such ravages over the whole Peninsula in the winter of 1812, that grain was awanting to sow the ground; and the generals-in-chief in Andalusia, La Mancha, Catalonia, and Old Castile, wrote to Berthier to request him to forward seed corn from France."—BELMAS, *Journ. des Sieges dans la Peninsule*, i. 223.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

thus continually experiencing the truth of Henry the Fourth's saying, "that in Spain, if you make war with a small force you are beaten, with a large one starved."* On the other hand, although Wellington experienced nearly the same difficulties, so far as the resources of the country were concerned, yet he had means of overcoming them which the enemy did not enjoy: of specie, indeed, he often had little or none; but the credit of the country, his own strenuous exertions, and the efforts of Government, went far to obviate this great disadvantage. Not only was the wealth of England applied with lavish, though sometimes misguided prodigality, to the support of his army, and supplies of all sorts brought by every wind that blew to the harbour of Lisbon, although the extraordinary difficulty of procuring specie from England, or the means of transport in the country, often exposed him to extreme difficulties on the Spanish frontier; but the great rivers of the Douro, the Mondego, and the Tagus, gave him the inestimable advantage of *water carriage* to a considerable distance in the interior. The former of these rivers was navigable for boats of a consider-

* "Such was the destitution of the country," says Marmont, "on the Portuguese frontier, that in April 1811, the army of Portugal lost its whole artillery and great part of its cavalry horses in six days, between the Coa and the Agueda, of absolute famine. I arrived at the headquarters of the army of the north in January last. I did not find a single grain of corn in the magazine, not a sous in the military chest; nothing any where but debts, and a real or factitious scarcity, of which it is hardly possible to form an idea, the natural result of the absurd system of administration which had been adopted. Provisions, even for each day's consumption, could be obtained only by arms in our hands: there is a wide difference between that state and the possession of magazines which can enable an army to move. On the other hand, the English army is always united and disposable, because it is supplied with money and the means of transport. Seven or eight thousand mules are employed in the transport of its means of subsistence. The hay which the English cavalry consumes on the banks of the Coa and the Agueda, comes from England."—MARMONT *to* BERTHIER, *26th Feb.* 1812. BELMAS, *Journ. des Sieges dans la Peninsule*, i. 629, 632. *Pieces Just.*

able burden to within eighty, the Mondego to within a hundred miles of the frontier on the Agueda; and Wellington took measures, which came into operation in March 1812, which rendered the Douro navigable as far as its junction with that lesser stream. This was an immense advantage, especially when the attack of fortified places was to be undertaken on the Portuguese frontier; for the French principal magazines were on the Douro and the Tormes, and their battering train and stores required to be brought from Madrid or Bayonne, the former of which was above two, the latter more than three hundred and fifty miles from the scene of action; whereas the stores of the English, even when carried to Ciudad Rodrigo or Badajoz, had only to be conveyed a hundred miles by land carriage, not half the distance. It was in a great measure from a consideration of this advantage that Wellington, in December 1811, wrote to Lord Liverpool: "Our situation is improving, and, whatever may be the fate of Valencia, if the Spanish nation hold out, I think they may yet be saved."[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. Dec. 5, 1811. Gurw. viii. 421, 422. Nap. iv. 365.

III. The French generals, following out the established Imperial system of making war maintain war, and wrenching the whole expenses of the troops out of the provinces which they occupied, had inflamed immensely the general irritation felt at their authority; and the misery and despair which their exactions produced, had augmented to a fearful degree the guerilla bands over the whole country. We have the authority of Mariano d'Orquija, home secretary to Joseph, for saying, that the great increase of the guerilla parties, especially in Leon, Navarre, and the two Castiles, in the years 1810, 1811, and 1812, arose from the establishment of provincial governments, and the innumerable acts of extortion practised on the inhabitants by the French military

General interrupting of the French communications by the guerillas.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

authorities.* This mode of providing for themselves was reduced to a perfect system by the Imperial generals; a fixed sum was imposed on the inhabitants, and levied from them with merciless severity by military execution; and to such a degree of perfection had long practice brought the French troops in this oppressive art, that they contrived to subsist, and levy all the resources which they required, out of districts which any other army would have considered as absolutely exhausted. The soldiers were every where trained themselves to reap the standing corn, and grind it by portable mills into flour; if green, they mowed it down with equal dexterity for their horses; if reaped, they forced it from the peasants' place of concealment, by placing the bayonet to their throats. In this way, they were, to a very late period of the war, when the general ruin of agriculture forced them to rely in some degree on magazines, entirely relieved from all care about communications or supplies, which to the English general, who paid for every thing that was consumed by, or required for his troops, often proved a matter of excessive difficulty.†

1 Nap. v. 147, and Wellington to Lord Bathurst. July 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 298.

But, on the other hand, they paid dearly for this

* "His Majesty could cite a crowd of instances of oppression which have exasperated the minds of the inhabitants, furnished arms to the insurrection, and given the English grounds for supposing projects which really did not exist, and rendering the war interminable. Let the number of brigands and insurgents in Spain be counted, and it will at once be seen how much they have increased since the institution of the military governments. It is the decree of 8th February 1810, establishing military governments in Navarre, Biscay, Aragon, and Catalonia, that is the real cause of the war still continuing, and the flames of discord having again risen up after they seemed extinguished."—*The Minister of State* D'Orquijo *to the* Duke de Santa Fe, *Madrid, 12th. Sept.* 1810, *taken at Vittoria—See* Napier, iv. 517, 523.

† "The army of Portugal," said Wellington, "has been surrounded for the last six weeks, and scarcely even a letter reaches its commanders; but the system of organized rapine and plunder, and the extraordinary discipline so long established in the French armies, enable it to subsist

advantage in the unbounded exasperation which they excited among the whole rural population, and the universal partisan warfare which they aroused in the flanks and rear of every considerable detachment. The consequence was, not merely that guerilla chiefs sprung up in every quarter where the shelter of mountains rendered pursuit difficult, and under Mina and Duran in Navarre, the Empecinado in the Guadalaxara mountains, the curate Merino in Leon, and Il Pastore on the coast of Biscay, kept alive the war, and did incredible mischief to detached bodies of the enemy; but smaller bodies called *Partidas* hovered every where round their flanks and rear, and almost entirely obstructed their communication with each other. On the other hand, the regularity with which the English always paid for all the supplies required for their army, rendered them so popular with the rural population, that they brought information and intercepted letters with incredible diligence and rapidity to headquarters, and kept the British general always as well informed of his adversaries' movements as they were ignorant of his. Thus Wellington, from his central position on the Portuguese frontier, was enabled to select his own time and place for an attack. His preparations were to a surprising degree unknown to the enemy, who, as already more than once remarked, had seldom any means of communicating with each other; and not unfrequently a serious blow was struck before they were even aware that preparations for it were going forward.[1]

Hatred of the French. Its great effects on the war.

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. Dec. 4, 1811. Gurw. viii. 422.

at the expense of the *total ruin* of the country in which it has been placed; and I am not certain that Marshal Marmont has not now at his command a greater quantity of provisions and supplies of every kind than we have from Lisbon."—WELLINGTON *to* LORD BATHURST, 21*st July* 1812. GURWOOD, ix. 298.

CHAP. LXII.

1811.

Jealousy and discord of the rival French powers in the Peninsula.

IV. The strange and impolitic division of the government of Spain which Napoleon had made, rendered it absolutely impossible that any thing approaching to a regular or united plan of operations could be carried on against an enemy. Not only was the central dominion of the crown at Madrid set at nought by the authority of the Emperor, who, from Paris, overruled and directed all the military operations, and yet left to the phantom king the shadow of power and the reality of responsibility; but all possibility of a cordial union between him and his lieutenants was destroyed by the unexampled, and, to a sovereign, highly grating distribution of the resources of the country which the Emperor had established between them. The whole revenues of the provinces were assigned to the French generals, with all the contributions which, by the most rigorous military execution, they could extract from the wretched inhabitants; while the king in the capital was left with the burden of a court, the expenses of which he had no means of defraying except the pension of a million of francs (£40,000) a-month which he received from France; and even that was, in the later stages of the contest, exclusively devoted to the payment of the troops, leaving the king himself utterly destitute. The consequence was, that the monarch and his court were reduced to such straits, that the royal councillors were seen begging their bread from door to door. Joseph himself was compelled to pawn his plate to raise the money required to purchase the necessaries of life; and Marshal Jourdan, major-general of the armies, after borrowing till his credit was exhausted, could, with difficulty, procure common subsistence.'* Such

1 Nap. v. 445.

* "I am in such distress," said Joseph, "as never king was before.

being the state of the court of Madrid, it is not surprising that the most bitter animosity should have prevailed between the king and the marshals in the provinces, who seemed placed there only to usurp his authority, and intercept his revenue. His letters to Napoleon, during the whole of his reign, are accordingly filled not only with the bitterest complaints of his own sufferings, but with positive accusations of treason against his lieutenants, especially Soult, whom he openly charged with aspiring to the throne of Andalusia.* But it was all in vain. The power of the sword was irrevocably vested in these rigorous taskmasters; and when Joseph, on one occasion, in desperation laid his hands on a large magazine of corn collected near Toledo, Marmont immediately sent troops, who recovered the magazine by force, telling the owners of the grain they might apply to the monarch for their payment.[1]

[1] Nap. iv. 347.

Discord of the marshals among themselves.

Nor was it only with the King of Spain that the French marshals, wielding the whole military power of the country, were then at variance. There was no cordial union or co-operation among themselves, and they wanted that indispensable preliminary to military operations—unity of design, and implicit

My plate is sold—my ministers and household are actually starving—misery is in every face, and men otherwise willing are deterred from joining a king so little able to support them—my revenue is seized by the generals for the supply of their troops. I cannot, as a King of Spain, without dishonour, partake of the resources thus torn by rapine from my subjects, whom I have sworn to protect. I cannot, in fine, be at once King of Spain and General of the French. Let me resign, and live peaceably in France. The Marquis Cavalles, a councillor of state and minister of justice, has been seen actually begging for a piece of bread."—JOSEPH *to* NAPOLEON, *April* 11, 1813, *taken at Vittoria*.—NAPIER, v. 444, 445.

See confidential letter of the DUKE DE FELTRE *to* JOSEPH, *Paris, 10th November* 1812; and COLONEL DESPERS *to* JOSEPH, 22*d September* 1812, *taken at Vittoria*.—NAPIER, v. *Nos.* 5 *and* 6, *Appendix; and* v. 197, *Text.*

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

obedience among the commanders employed. Each accustomed to regal state and authority in his own province, and looking to the Tuileries only for the instructions he was to obey, felt his vanity mortified, and his consequence lessened, when he was called upon to act in obedience to, or even to co-operate on equal terms with, any of his brother marshals. To such a height did this discord rise, that Ney was put under arrest by Massena, during the retreat from Portugal, for direct disobedience of orders; and no subsequent military operation of length was undertaken by any two of the marshals jointly, till the victories of Wellington forced them into one still disunited mass after the battle of Salamanca. Soult remained in Andalusia living in regal magnificence on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and deeply engaged in great designs for that province, from which he was only occasionally diverted by the advances of the British in Estremadura. Bessieres, openly condemning both the retention of Badajoz and the siege of Cadiz, found himself so occupied with the protection of the great communication in the north, from the increasing vigour of the Biscay and Navarre guerillas, as to be able to lend only a casual aid to the army of Portugal;* while Marmont, at the head of that force, found himself immediately ex-

* "All the world is aware of the vicious system of our operations; every one sees that we are too much scattered. We occupy too wide an extent of country: we exhaust our resources without profit and without necessity: we cling to dreams. Cadiz and Badajoz will swallow up all our resources: Cadiz, because it will not be taken: Badajoz, because it can only be supported by an army. The only safe course would be to destroy the one, and abandon, for the moment, all thought of the other. We should concentrate our forces; retain certain *points d'appui* for the protection of our magazines and hospitals; and regard two-thirds of Spain as a va t battle-field, which a single victory may either secure to or wrest from us, until we have changed our whole system, and seriously set about pacifying and conquering the country. We have not a

posed to the attacks of Wellington without any cordial support either from the army of the centre in his rear, or the distant columns of Soult or Bessieres on either flank. When the English general assumed the offensive, and the period of disaster began, the French commanders mutually laid the blame on each other: Joseph loudly accused them of selfish regard to their separate interests; while Napoleon, who could ill brook reverses of any kind, thundered out his censure in such cutting terms from the Tuileries or Russia against them all, as made the greater number of them tender their resignations, and gave rise to a constant and rapid change of commanders on the exposed frontier at the most critical period of the war. Each marshal was solicitous chiefly for the protection of his own province, with the safety of which he was entrusted, and in which the foundations of his fortune were laid; and when the king applied to either for succour, the answer he got from Soult or Suchet was, that he should come to Seville or Valencia, but that they could spare no aid to him. Wellington, on the other hand, though at the head of far inferior forces, singly commanded them all. Experience had taught him the impracticability of any co-operation with the wretched armies of Spain; and, relying on his own British and Portuguese alone, he trusted, by unity of operation and the advantages of a central position, to obtain advantages over forces in number triple his own, but

man on the coast, from Roussillon to Barcelona: Valencia is the centre of all the insurgents of the north and centre, and still we are besieging Cadiz."—BESSIERES *to* BERTHIER, *6th June* 1811. BELMAS, *Appendix*, No. 73, vol. i.

These views were highly displeasing to Napoleon, who a few months after superseded Bessieres in the command of the army of the north; but they were far sounder than the Emperor's own; and he lost the Peninsula by not following them.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

disseminated over an immense surface, and disjointed by separate interests and variety of direction.*

Desperate hostility produced by the cruelty of the French.

V.—But, beyond all doubt, the most powerful ally which Wellington had in the prosecution of his operations against the French generals in the Peninsula, was to be found in the oppressive manner in which they were constrained by Napoleon to carry on the war, and the incredible excesses of cruelty to which they had recourse to maintain their soldiers, and repress the hostility which the exactions, which were every where going forward, had excited in all the provinces. When it is recollected, indeed, that nearly four hundred thousand French soldiers were permanently quartered on the Spanish territory, and had been so now for three years; that during the whole of that time this immense body had been paid, fed, clothed, and lodged at the expense of the conquered districts, who had already been exhausted by the contributions of their own troops and guerillas, and devastated by all the horrors of war during four successive campaigns; it becomes rather a matter of astonishment how they contrived to extract any thing at all in the end from a country so long exposed to such devastations, than that their rapine could be levied only by the last atrocities of military execution. As it was, however, the systematic rigour and cruelty with which they enforced their exactions, were as unparalleled in modern warfare as their enormous amount was unexampled. It has been already noticed that, by his own admission, Suchet, whose civil administration was incomparably the least oppressive of any of the French generals in the Peninsula, contrived to extract eight millions of francs annually from the war-wasted pro-

* See *Pieces Just. in* BELMAS, *Journaux des Sieges*, i. 530—657.

vince of Aragon, or more than double what it had yielded in the most flourishing days of the monarchy,* and that two millions sterling were at once levied from the small province of Valencia; and, judging of the comparative weight of his requisitions and those made by others, from the flourishing aspect and general submission of his province compared with the wasted features and fierce resistance which were every where else exhibited, we may safely conclude that his exactions were not half of what were elsewhere experienced. It was this oppressive system of military contributions which was adopted by the French, and invariably acted upon from the very outset of the revolutionary war, and not the passing devastations of the soldiers, that was the principal evil which provoked so universal a spirit of hostility to their government.

Differences between the English plunder and the French exactions.

The English soldiers at times plundered just as much as their opponents, and perhaps, from their habits of intoxication, and the inferior class in society from which they were drawn, they were on such occasions more brutal in their disorders than the French; but there was this difference between the two, and it was a vital one to the inhabitants of the conquered countries: the English plunder was merely the unauthorized work of the common men, and was invariably repressed when order was restored by the officers; the whole supplies for the troops being paid with perfect regularity from the public funds of Government; whereas the French exactions were the result of a systematic method of providing for their armies, enjoined by express command upon all the Imperial generals, and forming the groundwork of the whole military policy of Napoleon. In the case of the former, when discipline was restored all military oppression ceased, and the presence

* *Ante*, viii. 254, and Suchet, i. 280–286.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

of the army was felt only in the quickened sale for every species of produce which the inhabitants enjoyed, and the immense circulation of money which took place: in that of the latter, the more thoroughly that military subordination was established, the greater was the misery which prevailed around the soldiers' cantonments, from the greater perfection which the system of methodical robbery had attained. And this difference appeared in the clearest manner when they respectively quitted the countries which they had long occupied. When Soult abandoned Andalusia, of which he had enjoyed the whole resources for three years, such was the universal destitution which prevailed, though the country was the richest in Spain, and had not seen any serious invasion during that time, that the French armies of the south, the centre, and Portugal, had received no pay for one, the civil servants none for two years;[1] whereas the wealth which had been poured into Portugal during the same period was so enormous, that it had far more than counterbalanced all the devastations of Massena's invasion, and all the sacrifices of the long protracted contest.[2]*

[1] Nap. v. 280.

[2] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. Nov. 3, 1810. Gurw. vi. 552, and vii. 188.

Dreadful severity of the French military decrees.

But oppressive as were the exactions of the French armies, the severity of the military executions by which they were levied, and the infamous cruelty of the Imperial decrees by which it was attempted to suppress the insurrections to which they gave rise, were still more instrumental in producing the general

* "The French discipline is founded upon the strength of the tyranny of the Government operating upon an army, the majority of whom are sober, well disposed, amenable to order, and in some degree educated. They live by the *authorized and regulated plunder* of the country, if any should remain: they suffer labour, hardships, and privations every day: they draw no money from France, and go on without pay, provisions, money, or any thing: but they lose, in consequence, half their army in every campaign."—WELLINGTON *to* LORD WELLESLEY, *January* 26, 1811; GURWOOD, vii. 188.

and increasing hostility to their authority which characterised the later years of the war. Not only did Soult in Andalusia issue and act upon a proclamation, directing "no quarter to be given to any of the Spanish armies or armed bands; and all the villages where any resistance was attempted, to be delivered to the flames;"* but Augereau, in Catalonia, announced "that every man taken with arms in his hands should be hung, without any form of process, by the highway; every house from which resistance was made should be burned, and every inhabitant in it put to the sword;"[1] and Bessieres in the north issued and enforced decrees unparalleled, it is to be hoped, in modern warfare, for the cold-blooded atrocity in which they are conceived. By the first of these it is declared, that "the clergy, alcaldes, curés, and justices of every village, shall be responsible for the exact payment of the contributions, and the furnishing the whole requisitions ordered by the military authorities. Every village which shall not immediately execute the orders which it has received, or furnish the supplies ordered, shall be delivered over to military execution; and every individual convicted of stimulating the people to withstand or delay obedience to the French orders for furnishings and requisitions, shall be forthwith delivered over to a military commission;"[2] while by the second it was announced, that "*the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, and nephews* of all individuals who have quitted their domiciles, and do not inhabit the villages occupied by the French, shall be held responsible, *in their persons and effects*, for all acts of violence committed by the insurgents; that if any inhabitant is carried off from his domicile, three of

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Aug. 13, 1810.

[1] See proclamation. Dec. 28, 1809. Belm. i. 429.

[2] See decree, June 6, 1811. Belm. i. 567.

* *Ante*, viii. 195.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

the nearest relations of *some brigand* shall be arrested as hostages, and shot if the individual is put to death; that every person who shall be absent eight days without permission shall be considered as a brigand, and *his relations* proceeded against in terms of this decree; that every person not provided with a *carte de sureté* shall be immediately sent to prison; every one found corresponding with the insurgents put to death; and every one writing to the inhabitants of a country occupied by them, sentenced to ten years' imprisonment."[1] It was reserved for the armies of a power which began the contest with the cry of war to the palace and peace to the cottage, and professed the most unbounded philanthropy, especially for the poor, to push, in the nineteenth century, the responsibility for alleged transgressions beyond the utmost limits assigned to them by the jealous tyranny of Imperial Rome; and to denounce the punishments proclaimed as a penalty not against subjects revolting against their acknowledged sovereign, but foreign citizens striving for the independence of their country, and discharging what they had themselves a thousand times justly styled the most sacred of human duties.

[1] Proclamation of Duke of Istria. June 5, 1811. Belm. i. 563.

General partisan resistance which this oppression produced.

When such were the principles of war, not casually acted on by ungovernable troops in a moment of fury, but deliberately announced and methodically enforced by the Imperial marshals for years together, it is not surprising that an uncontrollable thirst for revenge should have seized a large portion of the Spanish nation. Such, accordingly, was the case from the moment that the decrees establishing the military government were issued in February 1810. The excessive rigour with which the generals' contributions were every where levied, and the crushing weight with which they fell upon the peasantry,

filled the guerilla ranks, as well from the bereavements which they occasioned, as the destitution which they produced. They brought the bitterness of conquest home to every cottage in the kingdom; they drove the iron into the soul of the nation; revenge, that "wild species of justice," gained possession of every heart. If you enquired into the private history of the members of any of the guerilla bands, it uniformly recounted the same tale of suffering—one had had his father murdered by the French soldiers at the threshold of his home; another had seen his wife violated and massacred, or his children butchered before his eyes; a third had lost both his sons in the war; a fourth, burnt out of house and home, had joined the bands in the mountains, as the only means either of gaining a livelihood or wreaking vengeance. All in one way or other had been driven by suffering to forget every other feeling but the remembrance of their woes, and the determination to revenge them. Incredible were the obstacles which this state of things threw in the way of the French army; vain the attempt by severity to extinguish a spirit which found in the excesses of that very severity the principal cause of its increase. Already in June 1811, Marshal Bessieres had bitterly experienced the woful effect of the sanguinary policy which he had pursued.* So formidable did this insurrection become

* "It is time to take a decided part: the army of the north is composed, it is true, of 44,000 men; but, if you unite 20,000 together, all communication ceases, and the insurrection makes great progress. The coast will soon be lost as far as Bilboa. We are destitute of every thing: it is with the greatest difficulty we can live from day to day. The spirit of the country is frightful. The journey of King Joseph to Paris—the retreat from Portugal—the evacuation of the country as far as Salamanca—have elevated their mindsto a degree I cannot express. The bands enlarge and recruit daily at all points."—MARSHAL BESSIERES *to* BERTHIER, *June* 6, 1811; BELMAS, i. 560.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

in the course of 1812, that it engaged, as will appear in the sequel, the anxious attention both of Napoleon and his generals, and by degrees absorbed nearly the whole army of the north in a murderous and inglorious partisan warfare. Mina retaliated in Navarre by a counter-proclamation, in which, in an equally sanguinary but more excusable spirit, because it was in self-defence only, he declared that no quarter should be given to the French troops.*

Dec. 14. 1811.

Extraordinary difficulties which this partisan warfare imposed on the French.

In the midst of this terrible warfare, it was with the utmost difficulty that the great line of communication from Madrid to Bayonne could be kept open; fifty thousand men were required to guard it, and, independent of the great fortresses of Pampeluna and St Sebastian, and the fort of Burgos, nineteen fortified posts or blockhouses, each garrisoned by three or four hundred men, were erected on the line from the Bidassoa to the capital; eleven on the more circuitous route by Valladolid, Segovia, and the Guadarama; fifteen on the road from Valladolid to Saragossa; eight from Valladolid to Santander; and so on through the whole kingdom.[1] Thus Spain was overspread by a vast iron net, constructed at an enormous expense, and upheld by an incredible expenditure of men and treasure; but though it was sufficient, except in the mountain districts, to chain

[1] Belm. i. xii. Introd.

* "Navarre," said Mina, in the preamble of this proclamation, "is covered with desolation: every where tears are shed for the loss of the dearest friends: the father sees the body of his son hanging for having had the heroism to defend his country: the son witnesses with despair his father sinking under the horrors of a prison, for no other reason than that he is the parent of a hero who has fought for his native land. The mayors, the nobles, the priests, have been all ruined or conducted in captivity into France. All our efforts, by showing generosity to our captives, to introduce a more humane style of warfare have proved nugatory: there remains only the duty of retaliation."—*Proclamation by* Espoz y Mina, *December* 14, 1811; Belmas, i. 594.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

the inhabitants and prevent any serious insurrection, yet it absorbed a large proportion of the French troops, and was attended with a great and ceaseless consumption of life to the invaders; so that Wellington did not over-estimate its importance when, in December 1811, he wrote to Lord Liverpool: "The people of the country are still disposed to resist whenever they see a prospect of advantage. Buonaparte is still far from having effected the conquest even of that part of the Peninsula of which he has military possession; and in truth, the devastation which attends the progress of our enemies' arms, and is the consequence of their continuance in any part of the country, *is our best friend, and will in the end bring the contest to a conclusion.*"[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. Dec. 4, 1811. Gurw. viii. 422.

But if such were the difficulties,—arising partly from the nature of the country which was the seat of war, partly from the absurd distribution of power in the Peninsula by Napoleon, and partly from the oppressive and exterminating mode of conducting war which the revolution had established,—with which the French generals had to contend, Wellington on his part did not recline on a bed of roses: the obstacles which thwarted his operations, though arising from different causes, were nearly as great as those with which his antagonists had to strive; and it is hard to say whether an impartial survey of their relative situations does not leave his superiority as great as if his vast inferiority of force and unbroken career of victories were alone considered.

Wellington's difficulties.

The first and most important circumstance which constantly thwarted all the English general's efforts for the deliverance of the Peninsula, was the long-established and incurable corruption of every part of the Portuguese administration. This deplorable

Corruption and imbecility of the Portuguese administration.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

evil, the sad bequest of ages of despotism, had not at that period been counterbalanced in the dominions of the House of Braganza, by the feverish and sometimes almost supernatural energy which, in a democratic convulsion, springs from the temporary ascendant of poverty, and the unrestrained career of passion. Portugal had lost its monarch and regular government; its rulers owed their election in a great degree to popular choice, and the country was in the most violent state of general excitement; but the convulsion, as Wellington often observed, was anti-Gallican, not democratic: the old influences still pervaded every department of the administration; and that fearful vigour was awanting which invariably appears when uncontrolled power is for the first time vested in the masses, and the people enjoy the dangerous faculty of laying impositions on property, from the operations of which they are from their poverty almost entirely exempted. Hence the government and whole administration were corrupt and imbecile to a degree which appears almost inconceivable to those who have either experienced the permanent vigour of monarchial, or the transient energy of democratic states. So inveterate were abuses in every department, that the people could not conceive any administration without them; and when the soldiers enrolled under British command received the full pay promised them, their astonishment knew no bounds, having never under their native officers known what it was to have less than one-half or two-thirds absorbed by the peculation of those through whose hands the money passed.[1]

[1] Wellington to the Prince Regent of Portugal, April 1813. Nap. v. 422.

Had Wellington possessed the same unlimited power in the civil as he did in the military affairs of Portugal, these abuses would speedily have been

corrected; but, unfortunately, this was very far indeed from being the case. His direct authority extended only to the command of the armies; and although his influence was, doubtless, considerable with the regency at Lisbon, and he was most ably seconded by the British ambassador there, the Honourable Charles Stuart, yet his efforts to effect an amelioration in the public service, and communicate the requisite vigour to the administration, were perpetually thwarted by the inability of its members to comprehend his views; the extraordinary difficulty of reforming, amidst the din of external war, long established domestic abuses; and the constant dread which the regency had of interfering with existing emoluments, or adopting any measures of compulsion against inferior functionaries and magistrates, lest they should endanger their own popularity. Their nervousness on this last head was such as to render Government perfectly powerless, either in enforcing the laws or drawing forth the resources of the country; and all the remonstrances of Wellington were unable to make them even adventure upon the very first duty of executive administration, that of making inferior officers do their duty. The consequence was, that though the taxes were very heavy, they were most irregularly collected, and the rich and privileged classes discovered a thousand ways of evading them. Ample levies of men were voted; but no adequate measures were ever taken to bring forth the soldiers, or send them back if they had left their colours. The army in the field was seldom more than half the number for whom pay was drawn; clothing, ammunition, provisions, and stores of all sorts, were constantly wanting for the troops; the means of transport were rarely provided for them,

Imbecility with which the regency at Lisbon discharged their duties.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

and never in time; and even the English subsidy for the support of 30,000 men, which was regularly advanced, was so much diverted to other objects, that the pay of the men was almost always in arrear, and, in April 1813, the army in the field had received no pay for seven, the garrison for nine, the militia for fifteen months. The consequence was, that Wellington was obliged to feed the Portuguese troops from the British magazines; and this, in its turn, impoverished the resources, and paralysed the efforts of the British army.* Had these evils occurred

* "The unfortunate governments in the Peninsula had been reduced to such a state of decrepitude, that there was no authority in Spain or Portugal before the French invasion. The French invasion did not improve this state of things; and since that event no crime that I know of has been punished in either, excepting that of being a French partisan. Those malversations in office—those neglects of duty—that disobedience of order—that inattention to regulation which tend to defeat all plans for military operation, and ruin a state that is involved in war more than all the plots of French partisans, are passed unnoticed, notwithstanding the numerous complaints which Marshal Beresford and I have made. The cause of all this is the mistaken principle on which the Government have proceeded. They suppose the best foundation for their power is a low vulgar popularity, of which the evidence is the shouting of the mob at Lisbon, and the regular attendance at their levees; and to obtain this bubble, they have neglected the essential duty of making inferior functionaries do their duty, which, if done, would, ere this, have saved both countries. On the same principle, they will not regulate their finances, because it interferes with some man's job. They will not lay on new taxes; because none who do so are ever favourites with the mob. They have a general income of 10 and sometimes 20 *per cent;* but no one has yet paid a hundredth part of what he ought to have done. Thence, from want of money, they can pay nobody. The hire of mules and carts is never paid; the horses die, and the people desert; the commissaries have no money to buy provisions, or provide the means of transport; and thence the troops are constantly suffering; and as I will not allow pillage, every department of the service is paralysed. In consequence, I have been obliged to incorporate the Portuguese troops with the English divisions, and both are paid from one military chest; but the evil exists in its full extent with the detached corps and garrison."—WELLINGTON *to* COLONEL GORDON, 12*th June* 1811.—GURWOOD, viii. 6, 7.

in the French armies, their generals would speedily have applied a remedy by taking the supplies wanted by force, and sending the owners to the regency for payment; but such a proceeding would have been altogether repugnant to the English mode of carrying on war. It was abhorrent to the nature of Wellington, and the principles on which he was conducting the contest; and if adopted, he was well aware it would have purchased present relief by the sacrifice of all the grounds on which he hoped for ultimate success. Thus the evils continued through the whole campaign. Remonstrance and representation were the sole remedies relied on; the whole of this gigantic civil conflict in his rear fell on Wellington, as always ensues in such cases; and not unfrequently he was engaged in presence of the enemy, and within sight of their videttes, in lengthened yet vain memoirs on the most complicated details of Portuguese civil administration.[1]

[1] Nap. v. 422, 423. Wellington to Prince Regent of Portugal. Wellington to Stuart. April 9, 1812. Gurw. ix. 52 and viii. 6, 7.

The next circumstance which paralysed on repeated occasions the operations of the English general, and often at the most critical moments, was the wretched condition and total destitution of the Spanish armies, and the pride and obstinacy which rendered their generals unreasonably jealous of foreign interference, and equally averse to and incapable of any joint measures by which a material or durable benefit to the common cause could be obtained. Such, indeed, were the inefficiency and destitution of the Spanish forces, that it was soon discovered that their presence was a burden rather than an advantage to the Anglo-Portuguese troops, by bringing into the field a host of useless mouths, whose arms were incapable of rendering any effectual service in the field against the enemy, and who yet devoured all the

Wretched condition of the Spanish troops, and jealousy of their generals.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

resources by which the war could be maintained: and after the experience of the Talavera campaign, Wellington formed the resolution, from which he never afterwards deviated, of engaging in no joint undertaking whatever with the Castilian armies; but, trusting to them merely for distant diversions, to rely upon his own British and Portuguese forces alone for any operations in the front of the conflict. In fact, after the battles of Ocana and the Tormes, in the close of 1809,* no Spanish force worthy of the name of an army existed within the sphere of the English operations; and on the only subsequent occasion on which necessity compelled a junction of the British and Spanish in the field—at Albuera, in 1811—they only escaped a bloody defeat, induced by the obstinacy and intractability of the Spanish generals, and the unwieldy character of their troops, by the surpassing valour of the English soldiers, and the shedding of torrents of English blood.[1]†

[1] Wellington to Castanos, July 24, 1811. Gurw. viii. 133, and ix. 98, 111.

Treachery of the Cortes.

At a subsequent period of the war, the lustre of Wellington's victories, and the universal voice of all men of sense, in the Peninsula, which loudly demanded that he should be put at the head of the

* *Ante*, vii. 761; 765.

† "Your Excellency may depend upon the truth of what I have repeatedly had the honour of stating to you in conversation, that until the Spanish armies shall possess regular resources, by which they can be supplied during any operation which they may undertake, and are equipped in such a manner that casual or trifling difficulties will not impede their operations; and until the troops are disciplined, as all other troops are which are to meet an enemy in the field, it is useless to think of plans of co-operation between this army and those of Spain, which must be founded on the active offensive operations of all parts of the armies of all the three nations. I should deceive myself and you, and the Governments of both nations, if I were to encourage such a notion; and if I were to undertake the execution of such a plan I should risk the loss of my army for no object whatever."—WELLINGTON *to* CASTANOS, *24th July* 1811; GURWOOD, viii. 133.

whole military operations, compelled the Cadiz Government, much against their will, to appoint him generalissimo of all the armies; and the increased vigour and efficiency which, in spite of every difficulty, he speedily communicated to them, clearly demonstrated of what benefit it would have been to the common cause if he had been earlier elevated to the supreme command. But at this period of the contest he was not only thwarted by the frequent jealousy of the Spanish generals, one of whom, Ballasteros, was so mortified at his appointment that he resigned his command in disgust, and wellnigh occasioned the loss of the whole fruits of the battle of Salamanca;[1] but he found his influence and usefulness interrupted by treason and disloyalty in the seat of government itself. So fiercely, indeed, had the passions of democracy now begun to burn at Cadiz, that, in their animosity at the orderly spirit of aristocratic rule in England, the Republican leaders forgot the whole evils and wrongs of French invasion; and at a period when the deliverance of the Peninsula was no longer hopeless, but reasonable grounds for expecting it had arisen from the heroic efforts of the English troops, and the approaching hostility of the northern powers, a secret negotiation was going on between Joseph and a considerable proportion of the Cortes, for the delivery of Cadiz to the French troops, and the submission of the whole Peninsula to the Imperial government. They were willing to concede every thing, and acknowledge the Napoleon dynasty, provided the democratic constitution of 1812 was recognised. This conspiracy, suspected at the time, and since fully demonstrated by the documents which have been brought to light, soon made its effects apparent from the undisguised hostility which

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

[1] *Infra*, viii. ch. lxiii.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

the Cortes manifested towards Wellington and the English army; the occasional excesses of the soldiers were magnified by the voice of malignity; their services forgotten, their great deeds traduced; the contagion had reached some of the generals of the armies, who were prepared to pass over with their troops to the enemy; and nothing but the unbroken series of Wellington's victories, and the loud voice of fame which heralded his exploits, prevented the government of the Cortes, on the eve of the deliverance of their country from the hands of the spoiler, from blasting all the glories of the contest which it had so heroically maintained, by uncalled-for submission and shameless treachery at its termination.[1]*

[1] Nap. v. 82 and 406, 407.

Extreme penury of the English army in money during the war.

The last circumstance which, throughout his whole career, impeded the operations of Wellington, and had often wellnigh snatched the laurels of victory from his hand when almost within his grasp, was the extraordinary difficulty which the English Government experienced, especially in 1811, in procuring supplies of provisions and money for his army, and the very limited amount of reinforcements in troops which the circumstances of the British empire, or the apprehensions of Ministers, allowed them to send to his support. The circumstances have been already fully detailed† which had at that juncture, to

* Many persons in the Cortes held secret intercourse with Joseph, with the view of acknowledging his dynasty, on condition that he would accede to the general policy of the Cortes in civil government. Early in 1813, the Conde de Montejo, then a general in Elio's army of Murcia, had secretly made propositions to pass over, with the forces under his command, to King Joseph; and soon afterwards the whole army of the Duke del Parque, which had advanced to La Mancha, made offers of the same nature. They were actually in negotiation with Joseph when the Emperor's orders obliged the French army to abandon Madrid and take up the line of the Ebro.—NAPIER, v. 406, 407.

† *Ante*, viii. 124–130.

an unprecedented degree, reduced the resources of the empire. It was, in truth, the crisis of the war: both England and France were suffering immensely from their mutual blockade; and the contest seemed reduced to the question who should starve first. At such a time the closing of the American harbours and the vast markets of the United States to the productions of British industry, added to the calamity of an unusually bad harvest, which required nearly five millions sterling to be sent out of the country for the purchase of subsistence, not only rendered it almost an impossibility for the Government to send to Portugal either specie or provisions, but made it a matter of extraordinary difficulty for the English general to obtain from any quarter supplies for his army. His correspondence, accordingly, during the whole of his campaigns, but especially in the years 1810 and 1811, are filled with the difficulties which he experienced in getting provisions and the means of transport, and the backwardness of Government in making the requisite remittances; and not unfrequently, in the bitterness of his heart at finding his best laid schemes rendered abortive by the want of perhaps an inconsiderable sum in ready money, or a few stores in siege equipage, sharp complaints escaped him at the incapacity of the Administration, which, engrossed with its parliamentary contests, left undone the weightier matters of the war.* But in cooler moments, and

* The greater part of these complaints will be found quoted in Napier's *Peninsular War*, v. 52–64: Counter Remarks, *infra*: and they are scattered through all Gurwood's *Correspondence*.

As a specimen the following extracts may be given:—*April* 20, 1810. —"The Ministry are as much alarmed as the public, or as the Opposition pretend to be: the state of public opinion is very unfavourable to the war; and the general opinion is, that I am inclined to fight a desperate battle, which is to answer no purpose. Their private letters are in some

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

on a just retrospect of the extraordinary difficulties with which Government, as well as himself, had to struggle at that crisis, the candour of Wellington's nature modified the censure which the anxiety of the moment had called forth; he admitted that it was "the want of money, that is of specie, which was felt during the war; but that commodity, from the effect of the bank restriction, was then exceedingly scarce in England, and frequently could not be procured at all; and that he had uniformly received the most cordial support and encouragement from the Ministers, without excepting Mr Perceval, than whom a more honest, zealous, and able minister never served the King."[1]

[1] Wellington to Spencer Perceval, Esq. June 6, 1835. Nap. v. 50.

Counter remarks.

In truth, however, the complaints of Wellington were not altogether unfounded; and there can be no doubt that his confidential letters to Mr Stuart, the English ambassador at Lisbon, written at the time, must be regarded by history as documents on which more reliance should be placed than subsequent general recollection, at the distance of five-and-twenty

degree at variance with their public instructions: and they throw upon me the whole responsibility of bringing away the army in safety, after staying in the Peninsula till it becomes necessary to evacuate it. But it will not answer, in these times, to receive private hints and opinions from Ministers; which, if attended to, would lead to an act directly contrary to the spirit, and even the letter of the public instructions."[1] *June* 5, 1810.—"This letter will show you the difficulties under which we labour for want of provisions, and of money to buy them. The miserable and pitiful want of money prevents me from doing many things which might and ought to be done, for the safety of the country—yet, if any thing fails, I shall not be forgiven."[2] *December* 22, 1810.—"It is useless to expect more money from England, as the desire of economy has overcome even the fears of Ministers, and they have gone so far as to send home the transports, in order to save money."[3] *July* 26, 1811.—"The soldiers in the hospitals die because the Government have not money to pay for the hospital necessaries; and it is really disgusting to reflect upon the distresses occasioned by the lamentable want of funds to support the machine we have put in motion."[4] There are a great many other letters to the same effect.

[1] Wellington to Stuart.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

years, when the difficulty was over, and unequalled success had gilded the retrospect of the past with, perhaps, unfaithful colours. Even at the moment, however, when the contest was going on, Wellington expressed to Mr Stuart his strong sense of the extraordinary efforts which the British Government was making to supply the wants of the army, as well as the discreditable manner in which they were threatened by the selfishness of the Portuguese Administration. "The Portuguese Government," says he, "ought to be aware of the difficulties in which Great Britain is involved, in order to procure, not money's worth, but money—specie—to maintain the contest, of which the probable want alone renders the result doubtful. In order to avoid this want, they are making the most gigantic efforts, at an enormous expense, to send to this country every article that an army can require, in hopes to save the demand for, and expenditure of, specie, in the purchase of these articles in the country; and yet the Portuguese Government, instead of seconding their laudable efforts, set themselves against them."[1] Although, therefore, he was often most grievously hampered by the want of specie, and driven to every imaginable resource to procure supplies, by his own exertions, for his army; yet his difficulties arose from other and more general causes than any want of zealous co-operation on the part of the English Government; and, without entirely exculpating them from blame in allowing their attention to be more engrossed by their Parliamentary struggles than the Peninsular contest, it may safely be affirmed that these causes were the following:—

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Foundation for Wellington's complaints.

[1] Wellington to Stuart, Aug. 27, 1811. Gurw. viii. 222.

Though the contest had now continued nearly eighteen years, the English Government were still,

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Uniform neglect by the British of warlike preparations in time of peace.

thanks to our insular situation and invincible navy, mere novices in the art of military warfare; and the subordinate functionaries in every department required literally to be taught their several duties in presence of the enemy. There is nothing surprising in this: it is the natural result of the peculiar circumstances, unassailable power, nautical habits, popular government, and commercial character of the English people. Though naturally brave, and always fond of military renown, they are the reverse of warlike in their ordinary habits: naval supremacy has long since made them trust to their wooden walls for defence; commercial opulence opened more attractive pursuits than the barren heritage of the sword. In peace they invariably relax the sinews of war: no amount of experience can persuade them to take any antecedent measures either to avert disaster or to ensure success: they constantly expect, that without the least previous preparation, and with greatly inferior numbers, their armies, newly raised, uninstructed, and inexperienced, are to vanquish their enemies in every encounter; and the extraordinary valour of the Anglo-Saxon race has so often in pitched battles more than compensated every other disadvantage, that the result seems almost to justify the anticipation. But though in a regular stand-up fight native bravery may often make amends for the absence of military instruction or matured preparation, it is otherwise with the varied duties of a protracted campaign: skill and experience on the part of all engaged in the vast enterprise are there indispensable; and for their want no amount of talent in the general, or courage in the troops, can afford any compensation. An army, if brave and well-disciplined, may often vanquish a more ex-

perienced, but less sturdy antagonist, in the field; but it will prove no match for him in marching, retreating, finding provisions, or enduring the long-continued fatigues of a campaign—the same array which has successfully emerged from the perils of the battle-field, may ingloriously melt away amidst the accumulated horrors of ill-arranged hospitals; the courage which can mount the deadly breach, may be rendered wholly unavailing by the bluntness of intrenching tools, or the shortness of scaling ladders; and the fruits of a mighty victory, capable of changing the fate of the world, may be reft from the conquerors by the incapacity of commissaries in bringing up supplies, or the remissness of government in furnishing a few pieces of heavy artillery.

Universal inexperience of inferior functionaries.

Wants of this sort were those which Wellington so often and bitterly experienced in the course of the Peninsular campaign. Every person in the army, with a very few exceptions, from the general to the drummer, was at first ignorant of a great part of his most necessary duties; and the commander-in-chief was obliged himself to attend to the minutest details in every department, under the penalty of seeing his best laid projects miscarry from the ignorance or incapacity of those to whom some subordinate duties had been committed. No one can ever have been entrusted with the responsibility of directing new and inexperienced public servants in any department, who must not in the outset have found this difficulty: it may be conceived, then, with what weight it pressed on a general at the head of an army taking the field for the first time, on any extended scale, for a century, and filled with officers and civil functionaries to whom experience was unknown, and on whose theoretical instruction no pains whatever had been be-

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

stowed. In the battle-field, or evolutions in presence of the enemy, their native steadiness and admirable discipline rendered them from the very first adequate to any emergency; but how small a portion of the life of a soldier do such events occupy, and how much does military success in the end depend upon other and less dazzling qualities, and in which long experience had rendered the French perfect proficients! The commissariat was at first ignorant of its duties, and often failed in procuring supplies at the critical moment; the health of the soldiers, especially those newly sent out, frequently suffered dreadfully; and the military hospitals, charged sometimes with twenty thousand sick at a time, fostered contagion rather than cured disease:* the inebriety of the soldiers amidst the wines of the south too often aggravated the tendency to malaria fever which arose from the death-bestrodden gales of Estremadura; the engineers were able and instructed, but the troops unskilled in the labour of the trenches, the working tools often insufficient, the mining chisels blunt and useless, and the battering ordnance worn out or inadequate; and these obstacles, perpetually marring the general's operations at the most vital moment, could only be overcome by shedding torrents of heroic blood.[1] This universal ignorance is not to be wondered at: it results inevitably in a nation whose power has superseded the necessity of military experience, and whose temper has discouraged the military art.

See Wellington in Gurwood, *passim.*

The Ministry shared in the general deficiencies; trained for the most part to civil professions, they

* The total number of sick and wounded who passed through the military hospitals of Portugal, from 1808 to 1814, amounted to the enormous number of three hundred and sixty thousand men.—SIR JAMES M'GREGOR'S *Evidence before the House of Commons.*

were generally unfit to judge of military arrangements; they yielded on the management of the war to professional men of capacity inferior to their own, and often immersed, from long inactivity, in a flood of insignificant details; and the pressing concerns of Parliament, with the general conduct of government, left them little leisure to acquire, when in harness, the information requisite for a vigorous and enlightened prosecution of the cabinet duties connected with the military department. Above all, they were, to an extent which now appears almost inconceivable, unaware of the vital importance of *time* in war: they almost always attended in the end to the general's requests; but they often did so at a period when the season for gaining the important effects anticipated from them had passed: they combined operations so as to favour his designs, but they not unfrequently marred these minor enterprises by the incapacity of the untried officers whom they placed in command. It is in vain to ascribe these unhappy arrangements to the fault of any particular body of men then intrusted with the reins of government; they obviously arose from general causes, for they characterise equally the first years of every contest in British history: many a Byng has been morally executed for faults really owing to the constitution of his country: many a Bourgoyne has capitulated because the means of salvation were not, through popular heedlessness, put into his hands. If foresight and wisdom in previous preparation, commensurate to their vigour and resolution when warmed in the contest, had been given to democratic societies, the English people in modern, as the Roman in ancient times, must long since have obtained the empire of the world. Instead, therefore,

Causes which led to these obstacles to Wellington's success.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

of ascribing peculiar blame to any one class in the British islands for the manifold difficulties with which Wellington had to struggle in the first years of the contest, let us regard them as the inevitable consequence of previous neglect and long continued security on the part of the whole empire; and let this reflection only enhance our admiration for the hero whose resolution and sagacity prepared, and the army whose bravery and perseverance secured, the means of overcoming all these obstacles, and brought the British army in triumph to the walls of Paris.

The British difficulties greatest in the beginning.

But on considering the comparative weight of the difficulties with which the British and French generals had to contend in this memorable contest, one observation applies to them all, eminently characteristic of the conflicting principles on which it was conducted, and the antagonist powers which were there brought into operation on the opposite sides. The French, by disregarding every consideration of justice or humanity, forcibly wrenching from the vanquished people their whole resources, and extracting from their own countrymen, by the terrors of the conscription, all the physical force of sixty millions of subjects or allies, had obviously the advantage in the outset; and the chances were very great, that before the English could gain any solid footing in the Peninsula, they would be driven from it by a concentration, from all quarters, of overwhelming forces. This, accordingly, was what had happened in all the previous campaigns of the British during the war; and it had been prevented from again occurring only by the admirable foresight with which the position of Torres Vedras had been chosen and strengthened.

But on the other hand, when the first brunt of the Imperial onset had been withstood, and the contest was reduced to a series of protracted campaigns, the balance became more even, and at length, by the natural reaction of mankind against oppression, inclined decisively in favour of the British general. The English method of procuring supplies by paying for them, though extremely costly, and far less productive at first than the French mode of taking possession of them by force, proved in the end the only one which could permanently be relied on, for it alone did not destroy in consumption the means of reproduction. The English system of procuring men for the army by voluntary enlistment, though incapable of producing the vast arrays which were clustered by the conscription round the Imperial standards, did not exhaust the population in the same degree, and permitted the British armies to be progressively increased to the close of the contest, while the French, in its latter stages, declined in a fearful progression. The English principle of protecting the inhabitants, so far as it was possible, amidst the miseries of war, though in the beginning extremely burdensome, in comparison of the summary methods of spoliation and rapine invariably practised by the French, proved in the long run the most expedient; for it alone conciliated the affections, and husbanded the resources of the people, by whose aid or hostility the contest was to be determined. It is precisely the same in private life: the rapacity of the robber, or the prodigality of the spendthrift, often outshine in the outset the unobtrusive efforts of laborious industry; but mark the end of these things, and it will be found, that in the long run honesty is the best policy, and that the

The French difficulties greatest in the end.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

fruits of rapine, or the gains of dishonesty, ultimately avail as little to the grandeur of nations as the elevation of individuals.

Commencement of the first siege of Badajoz.

Having taken his determination to act on the offensive against the French in Spain, and to endeavour, in the outset, to recover the important fortress of Badajoz, Wellington moved his headquarters in the middle of May to Estremadura, taking with him 12,000 men to reinforce General Beresford, who had previously begun the campaign in that province, and had made himself master, after a few days' siege, of

April 17. Olivenza, with its garrison of 380 men. Badajoz was immediately thereafter blockaded; but the great floods of the Guadiana prevented any serious operations be-

May 5. ing commenced against it till the first week of May, when the communications across the river having been effected, the town was invested on both banks. Soult no sooner heard of the enterprise, than he began to collect troops at Seville for its relief; and on this occasion, the deficiencies of the English army, in all the knowledge and preparations requisite for a siege, were painfully conspicuous. All the zeal and ability of the engineer officers, and they were very great, could not compensate the wants of an army which had, at that period, no corps of sappers and miners in its ranks, nor a single private who knew how to carry on approaches under fire. A double attack was projected—one on the castle, and another on the fort of St Christoval; and on

May 8. the night of the 8th, ground was broken at the distance of four hundred yards from the latter. A bright moon enabled the enemy, however, to keep up a destructive fire on the working parties. A vigorous sally two days afterwards was repulsed with loss; but the Allies pursuing too far were torn

in flank by a discharge of grape shot from the ramparts, which, in a few minutes, struck down four hundred men; and though the besiegers continued their operations with great perseverance, the fire of Christoval was so superior, that four out of five of the guns placed in the trenches were speedily dismounted. On the 12th, ground was broken before the castle, and a battery commenced against the *tête-du-pont*; but before any progress could be made in the operations, intelligence was received that Soult was approaching; and Beresford instantly and wisely gave orders to discontinue the siege, and assemble all the forces in front to give battle.[1]

May 10.

May 12.

[1] Nap. iii. 523, 527. Vict. et Conq. xx. 235. Jones, Pen. War, i. 381, 385.

Having, by great exertions, collected all his disposable forces in and around Seville, this indefatigable marshal set out on the 10th from that capital, and joining Latour Maubourg on the road, made his appearance at Villa Franca and Almendralejo on the 14th, having in four days cleared the defiles of the Sierra Morena, and transported his troops from the banks of the Guadalquivir to the streams which nourish the Guadiana. On the 15th, he moved forward his advanced guard, occupying the heights in front of ALBUERA, where Beresford's army was concentrated. The force which was here at the disposal of the English general was considerable in numerical amount; but in composition, with the exception of the British, very inferior to the homogeneous veterans of the French marshal. General Blake arrived from Cadiz with 9000 men early on the morning of the 16th; Castanos, with 3000, chiefly horse, was also at hand; and Don Carlos d'Espana's men, who had still kept their ground in the northern slopes of the Sierra Morena since the rout of Modellin, swelled the Spanish force to 16,000

Forces of the opposing armies at Albuera.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

men, of whom above 2000 were cavalry. The Anglo-Portuguese force, consisting of two divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese brigade, numbered 7000 British and 8000 Portuguese sabres and bayonets; so that the Allies, upon the whole, had in the field 30,000 men, of whom 3000 were horse, with thirty-eight guns; but of these the English alone could be relied on for the decisive shock. Soult's force was inferior in numerical amount, being only 19,000 infantry, and 4000 horse; but they were all veteran troops, whom Napoleon justly termed "the finest in Europe," and he had fifty guns admirably harnessed and served; so that, in real military strength, his force was decidedly superior to that of his antagonist.[1]

[1] Beresford to Wellington. May 18, 1811. Gurw. vi. 573. Nap. iii. 528, 532. Vict. et Conq. xx. 235, 236. Tor. iv. 66,-67. Hamilton's Pen. Camp. iii. 83.

Description of the field of battle, and the French and English position.

Beresford, to whom Castanos, with a delicacy and forbearance very unusual at that period in the Spanish generals, had relinquished the command of the Allied army, had drawn up his motley array on the heights lying to the north of the Albuera streamlet, with the right thrown back in a semicircle, so as to guard against his flank being turned in that quarter, where still higher eminences rose beyond the extremity of the line. The British divisions, commanded by Cole and Stewart, were in the centre, on either side of the great road from the village of Albuera to Badajoz and Valverde, where the principal attack was anticipated: to the right of these stood Hamilton's Portuguese; while Alten, with his brave brigade of Germans, occupied the village and bridge of Albuera, in advance of the centre of the whole line; the right was strongly occupied by the Spaniards under Blake, whose position, on a line of heights, promised to render their unwieldy bulk of some service in making good the position. The French army, according

to their usual custom, was arrayed in dense masses, partly in the wood on the south of the Albuera stream, partly on the open ground to their north, and in advance both of the Albuera stream and Ferdia rivulet, which ran along the foot of the heights on the allied right. Soult, seeing that Beresford had neglected to occupy the high ground which commanded the whole field beyond his extreme right, in order to strengthen his centre commanding the great road, resolved to make his principal attack in that quarter; and with this view, during the night, unknown to the English general, and under the screen of the lofty height, concentrated his principal forces, consisting of Gerard's corps, Latour Maubourg's cuirassiers, and Ruty's guns, in all fifteen thousand men, with forty pieces of artillery, on the southern slope of the great hill, within half a mile of Beresford's right, but screened entirely from their view; while the remainder of his forces, consisting of Werle's division, Godinot's brigade, the light cavalry, and twelve guns, were arrayed in the wood to the south of the Albuera stream; the bridge over which, with the village of the same, were to be the object of an early attack, to distract the enemy's attention from the powerful onset preparing against them under cover of the lofty eminence on the right.[1]

[1] Nap. iii. 532, 533. Beresford's despatch, Gurw. vii. 574. Vict. et Conq. xx. 236. 237.

The action began early on the morning of the 16th, by a strong body of cavalry who were seen to cross the Albuera stream, opposite the allied right, while Godinot's division, preceded by ten guns, issued from the wood, and bore down upon the bridge. The British guns in the centre immediately opening upon the moving mass, ploughed through its columns with great effect; but the brave assailants pressed on,

Battle of Albuera. May 16.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

while their cannon answered the English fire, and crowding towards the bridge in great numbers, were soon warmly engaged with Alten's Germans at that important point. As the Hanoverians were soon pressed by superior numbers, Beresford advanced a Portuguese brigade to their support. A Spanish battery, placed on a height near the church, played warmly on all the approaches to the bridge: the French artillery thundered back without intermission, but with less effect; and the enemy made no material progress in that quarter. Perceiving, however, that Werle's division did not follow in the footsteps of Godinot's, Beresford justly concluded that the real attack was not intended at the village; and dispatched Colonel Hardinge to Blake to warn him that a serious onset might immediately be expected on the right, and entreating him to throw back his line and face outwards, so as to be prepared to receive it. The Spanish general, however, with characteristic obstinacy, refused to credit the information, and declined to endanger his troops by moving them in presence of the enemy. Colonel Shepelor, however, an intelligent German officer, who was serving as a volunteer in the Spanish staff, and has since written a valuable history of the war, was of the opposite opinion; and fixing his eyes steadily on the right, while Blake and Castanos were engrossed only with the attack on the bridge, at length showed them the glancing of deep columns of bayonets in the interstices of the wood in that direction. Yielding reluctantly to the evidence of his senses, Blake upon this ordered the requisite change of front; the second line of Spaniards was moved forward and drawn up at right angles to the first, thus forming a

bar across the extremity of the line, perpendicular to its direction, exactly as took place with the Russians in the middle of the battle of Eylau.[1] *

Before, however, this critical movement could be completed, the enemy in appalling strength were upon them. Werle, as Beresford had foreseen, no sooner saw Godinot's leading battalions engaged at the bridge, then leaving a few troops to connect the lines together, he rapidly countermarched to the westward, and issuing from the wood, joined the rear-guard of Gerard's corps as it was mounting the hill, on the right of the Allies; while at the same time the light cavalry, quitting Godinot's column, forded the Albuera, and ascending the hill at the gallop, joined the already formidable mass of Latour Maubourg's cuirassiers, who stood opposite to the British heavy dragoons under Lumley. Thus, while the Spanish line was going through the difficult operation of changing its front, it was attacked by fourteen thousand infantry, four thousand noble horse, and forty pieces of cannon. The contest was too unequal to be of long duration. Though such of Blake's troops as had got to their ground before the enemy were upon them, opposed a stout resistance, and for some time kept the assailants at bay, yet their line was irregular and confused when the firing began; huge gaps were visible into which the French cavalry poured with irresistible force; Ruty's guns, now playing within point-blank range, threw the moving regiments into confusion; and after a short and sanguinary struggle, the Spaniards were overthrown at all points, and the whole heights on which they stood fell into the enemy's hands, who immediately placed

[1] Nap. iii. 534, 536. Tor. iv. 68, Vict. et Conq. xx. 238, 239. Hamilton, iii. 84, 85.

The French accumulate their forces on the right, and force the Spanish position.

* *Ante*, vi. 79.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

their batteries there in position, in such a manner as to command the whole field of battle.[1]

[1] Nap. iii. 535, 536. Beresford's despatch, Gurw. vii. 374. Tor. iv. 68, 69. Vict. et Conq. xv. 288, 289.

The day seemed more than doubtful; and Soult, thinking that the whole army was yielding, was concentrating his reserves, and arranging his cavalry, so as to be able to convert the retreat into a rout, when Beresford, seeing the real point of attack now clearly pronounced, ordered up the British divisions from the centre to the scene of danger on the right. This order was instantly obeyed: the lines fell back into open column, and with a swift and steady step moved to the right, up the heights, from which the tumultuous array of the Spaniards was now hurled in wild confusion. But before they had reached the summit, a dreadful disaster, wellnigh attended with fatal consequences, befell them. The morning, which had throughout been cloudy and unsettled, at this time broke into heavy storms of wind and rain, accompanied with thick mists, under cover of one of which the French advance against the Spanish position had been effected. Another moment of darkness of the same description proved as fatal to the British as it had been favourable to their antagonists. When General Stewart, with the leading brigade of the second English division, still in column, arrived at the slope of the height which the French had gained, and had got through the Spaniards, he opened a heavy fire upon the enemy from the front rank; but finding they could not be shaken by musketry, immediately ordered a charge of bayonets; and the regiments were in the act of deploying for that purpose, when they were suddenly and unexpectedly attacked in rear, and in great part destroyed, by two regiments of hussars, and one of Polish lancers, which had got round their flank un-

Dreadful disaster of the British division which first got up.

observed during the mist. The 31st alone, which still remained in column, resisted the shock; but the remainder which had got into line, or were in the act of deploying, consisting of the Buffs, the 66th, and the second battalion of the 48th, were instantly pierced in many different quarters by the lancers from behind; and almost all slain on the spot, or driven forward into the enemy's line, and made prisoners. Seven hundred men and three standards fell into the hands of the cavalry: in the tumult of success they charged the second line coming up; and such was the confusion there from this disaster, that Beresford himself only escaped being made prisoner by his great courage and personal strength, which enabled him to parry the thrust, and dash from his saddle a lancer, who in the affray assailed him when alone and unattended by his suite.[1]

[1] Beresford's Despatch. Gurw. vii. 574. Nap. iii. 536, 537. Hamilton, iii. 86. Vict. et Conq. xx. 241, 242. Tor. iv. 69, 70.

All seemed lost: for not only were the heights, the key of the position, taken, and crowned with the enemy's infantry and artillery, but the British brigade, which had advanced to retake them, had almost all perished in the attempt. With the troops of any other nation it would probably have been so; but the English were determined not to be defeated, and it is surprising how often such a resolution in armies, as well as in individuals, works out its own accomplishment. The Spaniards, incapable of perceiving the change which had taken place in the action, continued to fire with great violence directly forward, although the British were before them; and no efforts on the part of Beresford could induce them to advance a step, while the succeeding columns of the English fired, in like manner, on the Spaniards, and endangered Blake himself. But, amidst all this confusion, the unconquerable courage of the British, by a kind of natural

Gallant attempt to retrieve the day by Houghton's brigade.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

instinct, led them to the enemy, and retrieved the disasters of the day. The 31st, under Major L'Estrange, isolated on the heights it had won in the midst of enemies, still maintained its ground, and kept up, now in line, a murderous fire on Gerard's dense columns, by which it was assailed. Dickson's artillery speedily came up to the front; and firing with prodigious rapidity, covered the advance of Houghton's brigade, who erelong got footing on the summit, and formed in line on the right of the 31st; the remainder of the second division, under Abercrombie, shortly after pressed gallantly forward and took post on its left, while two Spanish corps also came up to the front; and Lumley's horse artillery, on the extreme right, by a most skilful and well-directed fire, kept at a distance the menacing and far superior squadrons of Monbrun's cuirassiers.[1]

[1] Rausler, 540. Nap. iii. 537. Vict. et Conq. xx. 241. Tor. iv. 70, 71.

The British at the summit of the hill begin to fail.

Still the combat, though more equal, was far from being re-established. The British troops, in mounting the hill, were exposed to a dreadful fire of grape and musketry from the French guns and masses at the summit; hardly a half of any regiment got to the top unhurt; Houghton himself fell, while nobly heading and cheering on the 29th in the van; Duckworth of the 48th was slain; while the 57th and 48th, which next came up and opened into line in the midst of this terrific fire, soon had two-thirds of their numbers struck down by the fatal discharges of the enemy's artillery. But this combat of giants was too terrible to be of long duration: the French, though suffering enormously in their dense formation, stood their ground gallantly: neither party would recede an inch, though the fire was maintained within pistol-shot, and a deep though narrow gully, which ran along the front, rendered it impossible in that direction to

reach the enemy with the bayonet. At this awful crisis ammunition, from the rapidity of the discharges, failed; in some of the British regiments, despite all their valour, the fire slackened; Houghton's brigade, slowly and in firm array, retired: a fresh charge from the now re-assembled Polish lancers captured six English guns; and Beresford, deeming the battle lost, was making preparations for a retreat, and had actually brought up Hamilton's Portuguese brigade from the neighbourhood of the bridge of Albuera into a situation to cover the retrograde movement.[1]

[1] Kausler, 541, 542. Vict. et Conq. xx. 241, 242. Nap. iii. 537, 539. Beresford's Despatch. Gurw. vii. 574, 575.

Gallant charge of the fusilier brigade recovers the day.

In this extremity the firmness of one man changed the fate of the day, and in its ultimate effects, perhaps, determined the issue of the Peninsular war. While Beresford, under circumstances which not only justified, but perhaps called for the measure, was taking steps for a retreat, an officer on his staff, endowed with the eye of a general and the soul of a hero, boldly took upon himself the responsibility of venturing one more throw for victory. Colonel, now SIR HENRY HARDINGE, ordered General Cole to advance with his division on the right, which was still fresh, and, riding up to Abercrombie on the extreme left, ordered him also to bring his reserve brigade into action. Cole quickly put his line, with the fusilier brigade in the van, in motion, crossed the Aroya streamlet, and mounted the hill on the right, while Abercrombie, with the reserve brigade of the second division at the same time clearing their way through the throng, ascended on the left. These brave men soon changed the face of the day; and the advance which the enemy had made in the centre against Houghton's brigade, proved in its results extremely disastrous, by bringing them into a situation where the *flanks*, as well as the front, of their deep

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

columns were exposed to the incessant fire of the English infantry. It was exactly the counterpart of what had happened to Lannes's column which broke into the middle of the Austrian line at Aspern,* and the terrible British column which all but gained the battle of Fontenoy. Houghton's brigade, in the centre, encouraged by the timely succour, and having received a supply of ammunition from the rear, again stood firm, and fired with deadly aim on the front of the mass; while the fusilier brigade on one flank, and Abercrombie's on the other, by incessant discharges prevented any of the lines behind from deploying. The carnage in consequence was frightful, especially in the rear of the column; and the very superiority of the French numbers magnified the loss, and augmented the confusion, from causing every shot to tell with effect on the throng. Pressing incessantly on, the fusilier brigade recovered the captured guns, and dispersed the lancers; but a dreadful fire met them when they came near Gerard's infantry: Colonel Myers was killed; Cole himself, and Colonels Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe fell, badly wounded: and the whole brigade, "staggered by the iron tempest, reeled like sinking ships."[1]

[1] Nap. iii. 539, 540. Vict. et Conq. 240, 251. Belm. i. 183. Jom. iii. 505.

Heroic gallantry of the English infantry gains the day.

"Suddenly recovering, however," says Colonel Napier, in strains of sublime military eloquence, "they closed on their terrible enemy: and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult by voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans, extricating themselves from the crowded column, sacrifice their lives to gain time and space for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately on friends and foes, while the horsemen hover-

* *Ante*, vii. 342.

ing on the flanks threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm, weakened the stability of their order: their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front; their measured tread shook the ground; their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation; their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as foot by foot, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves, joining with the struggling multitude, endeavour to sustain the fight: their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion; and the mighty mass, at length giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood; and fifteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."[1]

[1] Nap. iii. 541. Vict. et Conq. xx. 241, 243. Belm. i. 183. Jom. iii.

Beresford, seeing the heights thus gloriously won, immediately took steps to secure the victory. Blake's first line, which had not yet been engaged, was removed to the village and bridge of Albuera; Alten's Germans, and the whole Portuguese, were thus rendered disposable, and formed a mass of ten thousand men, who advanced up the hill in the footsteps of Abercrombie and the fusilier brigade; while Ballasteros and Zayas with their Spanish brigades also pressed on in pursuit. Gerard's corps was soon entirely dissolved: almost all the men threw away their arms, dispersed, and sought for shelter in the wood behind the Albuera stream. Werle's reserves, five thousand strong, were brought up by Soult to cover

Conclusion of the battle.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

the retreat; but it was overwhelmed in the flight, and the general himself killed. "All, on the admission of the French themselves, was lost, if in that fatal moment the artillery had shared in the general consternation;"[1] but Ruty skilfully drew his guns together, and, emerging through the throng of fugitives, stood forth gallantly in the rear, and by the vigour of his fire arrested the advance of the conquerors. Such was the rapidity with which the guns were worked, and the precision of their aim, that the Spaniards and Portuguese, advancing in the rear of the British, suffered severely; the British infantry were obliged to wait till their own artillery came up, and meanwhile, the confused masses of the enemy got over the stream and regained the cover of the wood. Monbrun's cuirassiers restrained the Allied cavalry, which repeatedly endeavoured to charge, though, from the advanced position which they assumed to do so, they suffered dreadful losses from the British artillery; and at length this sanguinary contest gradually died away on both sides, rather from the exhaustion of the victors than any means of farther resistance, save in their artillery, which remained to the vanquished.[2]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 243.

[2] Jones, i. 387, 388. Vict. et Conq. xx. 243, 245. Nap. iii. 542, 543. Belm. i. 183. Beresford's Despatch. Gurw. vii. 575, 576.

Its results.

Such was the battle of Albuera, memorable as being the most desperate and bloody of any that occurred, not only in the Peninsular, but the whole Revolutionary war. Though the firing had only lasted four hours, eight thousand men had been struck down on the part of the French, and nearly seven on that of the Allies; an amount of loss, which, in proportion to the number of men actually engaged, is unparalleled in modern war, at least on the side of the victors. The Spaniards lost two thousand men; the Portuguese and Germans, six hundred; but the British alone,

four thousand three hundred—a chasm out of seven thousand five hundred English soldiers engaged, which marks clearly upon whom the weight of the contest had fallen. When the Buffs were called together after the battle, only three privates and one drummer answered to the muster-roll, though great numbers who had been made prisoners, and escaped in the confusion, joined during the night and next day. The survivors were less numerous than the wounded. All the efforts of the Portuguese videttes, to whom the care of the maimed was entrusted, could not provide for the multitude who required their aid; the streamlets on the field, swoln with the rain, which fell without intermission all night, ran red with human blood; while Blake, soured by his own defeat and the English success, refused to send any assistance to the succour of his bleeding allies. But, disastrous as was the condition of the British, that of the French was still more calamitous: forced to a retreat, they were encumbered by six thousand five hundred wounded, for whose relief no means whatever existed. Eight hundred of these unhappy men fell into the hands of the British, who left five hundred prisoners and one howitzer in the hands of their opponents. But though the trophies of victory were thus nearly balanced, the result showed decisively on which side success had really been won; for after remaining the next day in the wood from which he had issued in the morning of the battle, Soult on the following night retired towards Seville by the road he had advanced, leaving the British to resume their position undisturbed around the bastions of Badajoz.[1]

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

May 18. [1] Jones, i. 386. Nap. iii. 543, 544. Beresford's Despatch, Gurw. vii. 577, 578. Hamilton, iii. 87, 90.

As soon as it was ascertained that the enemy had retreated, the siege of that fortress was resumed on the left bank of the river, and the light cavalry followed the enemy towards the Sierra Morena, whither

Wellington arrives and takes the command of the siege of Badajoz.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Soult was retiring. He left the great road to Seville, and fell back towards Llerena, his cavalry being stationed near Usagre. There, a few days afterwards, they were attacked by the 3d and 4th dragoon guards, supported by Lumley's horse artillery in front, while Madden's Portuguese cavalry assailed them in flank. The result was, that they were completely overthrown, with the loss of a hundred slain and eighty prisoners. This brilliant affair terminated Beresford's independent operations: Wellington had arrived in person, and taken the command of the siege of Badajoz; Hill, who had returned to Portugal, resumed the command of the second division and the covering army; and Beresford set out for Lisbon, where his influence and great talents of administration were indispensably called for, to restore the dilapidated condition of the Portuguese army.[1]

May 23.

[1] Nap. iii. 545, 547. Vict. et Conq. xx. 249, 250. Belm. i. 184.

Though Beresford's firmness had not proved equal to the dreadful crisis of the battle itself; yet his resolution in maintaining his ground next day, with the diminished and bleeding remnant of his host, was deserving of the highest admiration, and had the most important effect on the fate of the campaign. Soult had still fifteen thousand veterans unhurt when he retired to Llerena; and so strongly had Beresford felt the vast superiority of that force to the handful of British who remained after the battle, that on the evening on which it had occurred, he had written to Wellington, avowing that he dreaded a renewal of the action and a bloody defeat on the succeeding day; although the troops, justly proud of their victory, had crowned the hill which they had won by such efforts with several hundred flags taken from the Polish lancers, where they waved

Moral results of the battle.

defiance to the enemy. That he had the firmness to make good his post, and brave such a danger, is a memorable instance of moral resolution; while the retreat of Soult, under circumstances when, by persevering, he might have perhaps achieved success, cannot but be considered as at once a blot in his escutcheon, and the most convincing proof of the ascendency gained by that extraordinary display of unconquerable intrepidity which the English army had made in this well debated field, and which encircled their arms with a halo of renown which carried them through all the subsequent dangers of the war. The French military historians are the first to admit this,—"Great and disastrous," say they, "was the influence which this fatal day exercised upon the spirit of the French soldiers. These old warriors, always heretofore conquerors in the north of Europe, and often in Spain, no longer approached the English but with a secret feeling of distrust; while they, on their part, discovered, by the result of the battle of Albuera, the vulnerable side of their antagonists, and learned that, by resisting vigorously the first shock, and taking advantage of superiority of number, they would rarely fail to gain the victory."[1] In truth, however, the British learned on this bloody field a simpler lesson which they never afterwards forgot, and which they applied with fatal efficacy in all the subsequent battles of the war; viz., that the English *in line* could successfully resist and defeat the French *in column;* and to the constant adherence to this maxim the unbroken career of success which followed is in a great measure to be ascribed.[2]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 249.

[2] Jom. iii. 506, 507. Nap. iii. 557, 558.

Delivered by the retreat of Soult from so formidable an antagonist, and deeply impressed with the

Renewal of the siege of Badajoz.

CHAP. LXII.

1811.

necessity of straining every nerve to regain the important fortress of Badajoz, Wellington had no sooner arrived on the spot than he recommenced

May 27. the siege with the utmost vigour. Both parties had improved to the uttermost the short breathing time afforded them by the battle of Albuera; and never was activity more indispensable to either; for it was well known that succour was approaching, and that, unless the place could be carried in a fortnight, the united armies of Marmont and Soult would arrive from the north and south, and compel the raising of the siege. During the absence of the allied forces, Philippon had levelled the trenches and destroyed the approaches of the besiegers, and not only repaired his own works where injured by their fire, but constructed strong interior intrenchments behind where breaches were expected, and considerably augmented his supplies of provisions. Colonel Dickson, who commanded the British engineers, had on his side, by extraordinary activity, got together a train of fifty pieces of heavy artillery; considerable supplies of stores had arrived, and six hundred gunners were at hand to man the pieces. All things being at length in readiness, the

May 27. place was wholly invested on the 27th, and two days afterwards ground broken against Fort Christoval. The operations of the besiegers were pushed with extraordinary vigour, as Wellington was well aware that the success of the enterprise entirely depended on celerity; and on the evening of the

Jun. 6. 6th June the breach was declared practicable. At midnight the storming party advanced to the attack. They reached the glacis in safety, and descended unobserved into the ditch, but upon arriving at the foot of the breach it was discovered, that after dark

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

the rubbish had been cleared away from the bottom of the slope, so that it could not be ascended; but the troops, boiling with courage, refused to retire, and remained making vain attempts to get in by escalade, till the severity of the fire, and the stout resistance of the enemy, obliged them to retreat.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. June 12, 1811. Gurw. viii. 12. Nap. iv. 187, 190. Jones, i. 391. Vict. et Conq. xx. 249.

Taught by this check the quality of the enemy with whom they had to deal, the British took more precautions in their next attempt: the fire continued with great vigour, both on Christoval and the body of the place, on the three following days, though, from the age and bad condition of the artillery, which had been drawn from Elvas, and of which a part was a hundred and fifty years old, a considerable proportion of the battering guns had become unserviceable. A heavy fire was also kept up on the castle: but although the breaching batteries played on it at the distance only of five hundred yards for seven days, from the 2d to the 9th June, yet so defective was the ordnance, that at the end of that time the breach was hardly practicable; and at any rate it could not be stormed while the enemy held Christoval, as the guns from the latter fort swept along the foot of the castle wall and over the ground in its front. A second attempt, therefore, was made to carry the latter fort; but though the storming party was stronger, and the ladders longer than before, a second defeat was experienced. The garrison, who, on the late occasion, had been only seventy-five, were now increased to two hundred men: their spirit, much raised by their former success, was now elevated to such a pitch that they stood on their bastions inviting the British with loud cheers to come on: and the provident care of the governor of the fortress, Philippon, whose great

Second assault on Christoval, which is repulsed.

June 9.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

talents in this species of warfare were now fully manifested, had not only given each soldier four loaded muskets, but arranged a formidable array of bombs, hand grenades, and powder barrels on the top of the rampart, ready to be rolled over among the assailants the moment they reached the foot of the wall. Notwithstanding these obstacles, and the heroic valour of the garrison, who fought like lions in defence of their post, the assaulting columns united at the bottom of the breach: the scaling ladders were applied, and some brave men reached the summit; but they were immediately bayoneted by the garrison, and at the same time the bombs and powder barrels, being rolled over, exploded with such violence that the order to retire was reluctantly given. The heroic French then listened to the cries of the British wounded who had been left in the ditch, and desiring them to raise their scaling ladders, themselves helped them into the fort, where they were kindly treated: an admirable instance of generosity at such a moment, but by no means singular on either side in the contest of these truly brave nations throughout the whole Peninsular war.[1]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 249, 250. Jones, i. 291, 292. Wellington to Lord Liverpool. June 13, 1811. Gurw. viii. 12, 13. Nap. iv. 190, 192.

Though the British army had lost four hundred men since they sat down the second time before Badajoz, and a few days more would unquestionably have put them in possession of that fortress; yet it had now become no longer possible to continue the siege. Napoleon, who fully concurred in Wellington's opinion as to the vast importance of this stronghold upon the issue of the campaign, had, early in May, sent positive orders to Marmont to collect his forces, and co-operate with Soult in the most vigorous manner for its deliverance; and for this object

Measures of Napoleon to raise the siege.

CHAP. LXII.

1811.

reinforcements had been poured into the armies on the Portuguese frontier from all parts of Spain. Soult received four thousand men from the army of the north, and as many from that of the south: Drouet, with eight thousand men from the ninth corps, which had been dissolved, was already in march to join him: Marmont was directed to collect his forces on the Tagus, and second the operations of Soult for the relief of Badajoz: Bessieres was to occupy Valladolid with ten thousand men, and push an advanced guard to Salamanca, to observe the Ciudad Rodrigo frontier: while Bonnet was to evacuate the Asturias, and take a position on the Orbigo, towards Leon, to observe the loose Spanish array which was collected on the Galician frontier.[1]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 253, 254. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 13, 1811. Belm. i. 189, 190.

His defensive preparations through the whole of the north of Spain.

Nor was the anxiety of the Emperor confined merely to measures calculated to effect the deliverance of Badajoz. Defensive precautions on the most extensive scale were made, over the whole north of the Peninsula, as far back as Bayonne. Astorga was directed to be evacuated, and in part dismantled; strong works erected around the castle of Burgos, the importance of which he even then clearly discerned; a *tête-du-pont* constructed on the Ebro at Miranda, and another on the Bidassoa at Irun; the defiles between Vittoria and Bayonne secured by block-houses and fortified posts; a citadel of great strength constructed at Santona, so as to render its peninsula impregnable, and serve as a *point d'appui* to a force sent by sea from Bayonne to operate in the rear of an advancing army; a division under Vaendermaison crossed the Pyrenees, and was incorporated with the army of the north; four reserve brigades collected at Bayonne under General Monthion, who were instantly sent off into Spain as fast

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

as they arrived, and replaced in that fortress by a fresh reserve division of 6000 men; and an entire new corps of reserve formed of the divisions Reille, Caffarelli, Souham, and the Italian division of Severole, in all 40,000 strong, to whom the important duty was committed of occupying Biscay, Navarre, and the north of Old Castile, and keeping open the great line of communication with Bayonne. By these means, a very great addition was made to the strength of the French armies in Spain, which, by the end of September, were raised to the enormous amount of 368,000 men, of whom 314,000 were present with the eagles; a force so prodigious as apparently to render hopeless any attempt on the part of the English to dislodge them from the country. Nor were material preparations neglected for the equipment and support of the warlike multitude. Long convoys of ammunition and military stores of all kinds were incessantly traversing the Pyrenees. A million of rations of biscuit were prepared in each of the places of Bayonne, Burgos, and Valladolid; and though last, not least as an indication of the sense of Napoleon of the pressing necessity of arresting the English, the maxim that war should maintain war was for a while suspended, and forty millions of francs (£1,600,000) were despatched from Paris for the headquarters of the different armies.[1]

[1] Belm. i. 190, 191. Napoleon to Bessieres. June 8, 1811, and Caffarelli, June 11, 1811, Marmont to Napoleon, June 21, 1811, Belm. App. i. No. 76, 78.

Although this general displacement and concentration of the French armies, in consequence of the offensive movement of Wellington, had the most important effects ultimately upon the war, and afforded the clearest indication of the importance which Napoleon attached to it, as well as the judgment with which the stroke had been directed; yet, in the first instance, it of necessity compelled the

Wellington raises the siege, and retires into Portugal. June 10.

retreat of the English army, and the raising of the siege of Badajoz. On the morning of the 10th, an intercepted letter was brought to Wellington from Soult to Marmont, pointing out the enemy's intention immediately to concentrate their whole force in Estremadura, and converge at the same time to the banks of the Guadiana; while, on the same day, intelligence arrived from the frontiers of Castile, that Marmont's corps were rapidly marching for the same destination, and would be at Merida by the 15th. The united strength of these armies, with the reinforcements they had received, would have amounted to above sixty thousand men, to whom the English general could not, from the sickness of the British army and the extraordinary diminution of the Portuguese troops—from the fatigues of the winter campaign and the inefficiency of the local government, oppose more than forty-eight thousand. In addition to this, the Portuguese authorities had allowed the stores in Elvas to run so low, that enough did not remain in its magazines for a fortnight's defence of the place, far less to answer the demands of the siege of Badajoz: there were none in Lisbon; and no means of transport existed to bring up the English stores from their great depot at Abrantes, as no representations on the part of Wellington could induce the regency at Lisbon to endanger their popularity, by taking any steps to draw forth the resources of the country for these necessary services. In these circumstances the raising of the siege had become indispensable; and it took place, without molestation, on the 10th and 11th, the stores and heavy cannon being removed in safety to Elvas.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 13, 1811. Gurw. viii. 14, 15. Jones, i. 393. Vict. et Conq. xx. 253, 254.

It was not long before the wisdom of this retreat became apparent; for Soult and Marmont soon ap-

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

peared in most formidable strength on the banks of the Guadiana. The former of these marshals having received a part of the reinforcements destined for him, particularly those under Drouet, was strong enough to raise the siege himself, and for that purpose he broke up on the 11th from Llerena, and advanced towards Albuera, whither also Wellington repaired with the bulk of his forces, still maintaining the blockade of Badajoz, in hopes that the garrison, who were known to be in great want of provisions, would be compelled to capitulate before Marmont arrived. The English general, on this occasion, did not fail to occupy the hill which had been so fiercely contested on the former occasion, and the line in other places was strengthened by field-works. Soult, however, who was aware how rapidly Marmont was approaching, was too wary to be drawn into a combat with equal forces; and he therefore kept off till the 17th, when the near approach of the army of Portugal made it indispensable for the whole allied army to raise the blockade and retire behind the Guadiana. In effect, that marshal, who had neither magazines nor a single horse or mule to convey his supplies, had, by the terrors of military execution, extorted the requisite provisions and means of transport out of the wretched inhabitants, who were reduced to despair;* and setting out from Alba de Tormes on the 3d June, he had advanced, by forced marches, through Ciudad Rodrigo and the Puerto

Entry of Marmont and Soult into Badajoz.

June 17.

* "L'armée du Marechal Marmont se trouvait sans magasins et sans un seul caisson ou cheval pour transporter les canons; tous les chevaux et les mulets du train des equipages militaires ayant peris en Portugal. Elle enleva dans le pays tous les bestiaux, tous les mulets tous les anes, toutes les boitures, et emporta tout le ble qu'elle peut ramassez. La province se trouva *completement ruiné* sur une rayon immense, et les habitants furent reduits au desespoir."—BELMAS, i. 192.

de Banos to Truxillo, which he reached on the 14th. On the 17th his advanced guard was at Merida, while Soult approached to Albuera; and the British army having retired the same day across the Guadiana, the junction of the French armies was effected on the day following, and they entered Badajoz in triumph on the 28th, at the moment when Philippon and his brave comrades, having exhausted all their means of subsistence, were preparing the means of breaking through the British lines and escaping.[1]

[1] June 17. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 20, 1811, Gurw. viii. 36, 37. Marmont to Berthier, June 21, 1811, and Soult to Berthier, June 22, 1811. Belm. i. App. No. 78, 79.

A signal opportunity was now presented to the French generals for striking a great blow at the English army. By collecting their forces from all quarters, stripping the Asturias, Leon, and the two Castiles of troops, and having enough only in Andalusia to maintain the garrisons, they had assembled a prodigious army in front of Badajoz. Marmont brought 31,000 infantry and 5000 horse, and Soult 25,000 infantry and 3000 admirable horse; in all 56,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, with ninety pieces of cannon. To oppose this powerful array, Wellington, who had assembled his whole force from Beira, had only the British and Portuguese; the Spaniards, who took part in the battle of Albuera, having been detached under Blake to cross the Guadalquivir, and menace Seville. There were collected 42,000 infantry, however, and 4000 cavalry, with sixty-four pieces of cannon, round the standards of the British chief; and these were tried soldiers, who had all faced the enemy, and who had the confidence which experience alone can give in each other. Though the French superiority, therefore, especially in cavalry and artillery, was very considerable, and the plains in which the action would be fought, near the Guadiana, were eminently favourable to the action of those arms; yet Wellington justly conceived that,

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

with nearly 50,000 British and Portuguese soldiers, he need not fear to give battle. Selecting, therefore, a defensive position behind the Caja, he awaited the approach of the enemy, who crossed the Guadiana in great force, and approached to reconnoitre his position. Every thing announced a great and decisive struggle; and as the French had, with infinite labour and difficulty, concentrated their forces from all quarters, from the banks of the Guadalquivir to the mountains of Asturias, and the English had no reserves to fall back upon, it was undoubtedly for their interest to have brought on the fight.[1]

Wellington takes post on the Caja.

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. June 20, 1811. Gurw. viii. 37, 38. Nap. iv. 202. Belm. i. 193. 194. Vict. et Conq. xx. 253, 257.

But at this perilous crisis it was seen of what avail the moral weight of an army is, and how completely it can compensate even the most considerable advantage in point of numbers and equipment in the array to which it is opposed. Though the British sabres and bayonets in the field did not exceed twenty-eight thousand, or scarcely half of the French army, the remainder being Portuguese, yet these were the soldiers of Talavera and Busaco: the glory of Albuera shone around the bayonets of the right wing, the remembrance of Fuentes d'Onoro added terrors to the left. Despite all the advantages of their situation, and they were many—for the works of Elvas were in such a dilapidated condition that they could not have stood a week's siege, and the garrison had only ten thousand round shot left—the French marshals recoiled before the danger of hazarding the fate of the Peninsula on a pitched battle with such an army; and after re-occupying Olivenza, which was abandoned on their approach, and reconnoitring the British position, they withdrew without fighting. Nothing occurred except a sharp cavalry action near Elvas, in which 600 British dragoons, at first successful, were at last drawn into an ambuscade by a

Soult and Marmont decline fighting, and withdraw.

June 24.

feigned retreat of the French hussars, and defeated with the loss of 150 men. After remaining a few days together, the French noble array separated, Soult retiring by the way of Albuera towards Seville, and Marmont defiling towards Truxillo and the valley of the Tagus near Talavera.[1]

1811.

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. June 27. 1811. Gurw. viii. 57. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 258, 259. Nap. iv. 201.

Wellington's principal reliance for the means of breaking up this great combined force, which threatened such dangers to Portugal in his front, was on Blake's troops, who, having separated from the British when they crossed the Guadiana on the 17th, had taken the road for Seville, now entirely denuded of defenders by the concentration of Soult's forces for the relief of Badajoz. Although the Spanish general did occasion a diversion on this favourable occasion in the French rear, yet he effected nothing compared to what, with more judgment and energy, might have been achieved. Having recrossed the Guadiana at Martola on the 22d, he reached Castillegos on the 24th, where he remained inactive till the 30th, as if with the express design of giving the enemy time to prepare for his approach. He then moved forward; but instead of directing the bulk of his forces on Seville, of which he might have easily made himself master, and ruined the famous foundery there, from which the French were making all their ordnance for the siege of Cadiz, he turned to the right, and wasted three days in a fruitless siege of La Niebla, a walled town and castle garrisoned by 300 men, in the mountains. Villemur and Ballasteros, meanwhile, with a small body approached within cannon-shot of Seville, where the utmost alarm prevailed among the French depots, who took refuge, with the Governor-general Daricau, in the fortified convent of La Cartusa; but Soult was by this time

Operations of Blake and Ballasteros in Andalusia.

June 3.

July 2.

CHAP. LXII. 1811. rapidly approaching, and the time for striking the blow had gone by. After blowing up the fortifications of Olivenza, he broke up from Badajoz on the July 4. 27th June, relieved with one of his divisions the castle of Niebla early in July, dispatched another with the utmost haste to secure Seville from assault, and himself crossing the Sierra Morena by Monasterio, re-entered July 7. the Andalusian capital on the 7th. Blake, upon the approach of the French, retired precipitately from La Niebla into Portugal, and thence descended to Agamonte, at the mouth of the Guadiana, where he fortunately met with an English frigate and three hundred transports, which conveyed his infantry and cannon to Cadiz. Ballasteros, who with the cavalry covered the embarkation, afterwards took refuge in the adjoining island of Canidas, where he threw up intrenchments, and there he remained till August, when he embarked at Villa Real, and sailed with his infantry to the mountains of Ronda, while his cavalry remounted the Guadiana, and joined Castanos, who, with a small force, still kept his ground in the mountains of Estremadura.[1]*

1 Nap. iv. 209, 211. Tor. iv. 77, 81. Vict. et Conq. xx. 259, 265.

Total rout of the Spaniards at Baza in Murcia.

While these momentous operations were going forward on the Guadiana, a feeble attempt at renewed vigour had taken place in Grenada and on the Murcian frontiers. The mountaineers of Ronda, who had never been subdued, were encouraged by the

* A curious incident, attended with most disastrous consequences, took place in Estremadura at this period. As some of the Portuguese troops were firing a *feu-de-joie* in a corn-field in the neighbourhood of Badajoz in dry and sultry weather, the corn took fire, and the conflagration spread with such extraordinary rapidity and violence, advancing, as it always does, towards the north-east wind, which was blowing with gentle gales, that in three days it had reached Merida, a distance of above thirty miles, which only escaped total destruction by the ample stream of the Guadiana, which stopped the flames.—See TORENO, iv. 75.

departure of the whole disposable forces in Andalusia for the banks of the Guadiana, to make an attempt against the town of Ronda, the capital of their district; and 4000 armed peasants, under the Marquis Las Cucoas, had already reduced the French garrison there, 800 strong, to the last extremity. Soult immediately collected four columns from Seville, Cadiz, Malaga, and Grenada, with which he speedily raised the siege, and compelled the Spaniards to take refuge in their inaccessible cliffs, with the loss of some hundred men. Indefatigable in his activity, the French marshal next proceeded against the numerous but desultory array of the Murcians, who, to the number of 24,000 men, had advanced against Grenada during his absence on the north of the Sierra Morena. The Spaniards made hardly any resistance. No sooner did the advanced guard of Soult make its appearance, than the whole array, which was strongly posted at Venta de Bahal in front of Baza, with a strong ravine protecting their front, took to flight and dispersed; and nothing but the unnecessary circumspection of Godinot, who was destined to cut off their retreat, saved them from total ruin. So complete, however, was their rout, that when Blake, who had been dispatched from Cadiz with his troops to take the command of this numerous army, arrived, it had entirely vanished, and no force whatever remained in the field. The fugitives, however, in great part took refuge in the city of Murcia; its intrenchments were strong; the yellow fever was raging in Carthagena at no great distance; and the French troops were so dreadfully worn out by the long marches and excessive fatigues of the campaign, that Soult refrained from undertaking the siege, and gave his wearied soldiers their

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

July 5.

July 8.

Aug. 4.

CHAP. LXII.

long-wished-for rest amidst the smiling villages of Andalusia.[1]

1811.

[1] Vict. et Conq. xx. 264, 267. Nap. iv. 211, 212. Tor. iv. 200, 207.

Rise and rapid progress of the insurrection in the northern provinces.

Consequences far more important followed on the other extremity of this vast line of operations. The evacuation of the Asturias by Bonnet, the concentration of the French forces in Old Castile, and the commencement of defensive preparations at Burgos, on the Ebro, and even on the Bidassoa, in pursuance of the provident commands of Napoleon, which have been already mentioned,* produced an extraordinary excitement in the northern provinces. The inhabitants of these mountain regions, brave, hardy, and independent, in whom centuries of freedom had created elevation of character, and Alpine air nourished physical resolution, were universally roused by these apparently decisive indications of returning success, and with joyful steps repaired to the headquarters of the indefatigable chief who still, in their rocky fastnesses, maintained the standard of independence. The intelligence of the retreat of the French from Portugal, and the battles of Fuentes d'Onoro and Albuera, coupled with the defensive preparations made on so extensive a scale in all Biscay and Old Castile, produced a general belief on the frontier that the French were about to retire altogether from the Peninsula, and that a vigorous insurrection in the northern provinces would cut off their means of retreat, and effect, by a clap of thunder, the entire deliverance of the Peninsula. Upon a brave people, impressed with these feelings and expectations, Mina from Navarre, Mendizabel, who had disembarked in Biscay from Asturias, and Duran and the Empecinado in the northern parts of Old Castile, found no difficulty in

* *Ante*, viii. 342.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

making a very great impression. The insurrection spread like wild-fire through all the hill country; every glen, every valley poured forth its little horde of men; the patriot bands swelled in all the principal towns; and, contrary to what had heretofore been observed, were filled with young men of the first families in the country.[1]

[1] Count Belliard to Berthier. June 3, 1811. Belm. i. App. No. 72, and i. 204.

Mendizabel, who had landed in Biscay early in June, soon found himself at the head of twelve thousand men, and from Potes, his headquarters, extended his incursions to Burgos and Vittoria: Mina was the chief of an equal force in Navarre, and, sweeping the country to the very gates of Saragossa, answered the atrocious proclamations, already noticed, of Bessieres* by a counter one, breathing the indignant spirit of retaliation and defiance;† while the Empecinado and Duran in Old Castile had become so formidable that they laid siege to, and captured the important fortified town of Catalayud, though defended by five hundred men. So urgent did affairs become in the northern provinces, and so uneasy was Napoleon at the insecurity of his communications in that quarter, that the imperial guard, which had entered Spain, were halted at Vittoria, and dispatched to the right and left against the insurgents; succour was drawn both from the army of Portugal and that of the centre; and the large reinforcements pouring through the Pyrenees into the Peninsula were in great part absorbed in this harassing and murderous warfare. Mina's bands were defeated on two occasions with considerable loss by these formidable antagonists; but their success availed little to the victors. The defeated corps, as in the days of Sertorius, dispersed, having previously fixed on some distant and inacces-

Operations of the insurgents in these provinces.

June 5.

June 9.

June 14.

* *Ante*, viii. 291. † *Ante*, viii. 294.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

sible point of rendezvous. The French retired from the country, thinking that the insurrection was subdued; and they were apprised of their mistake by learning that their enemy had reappeared in undiminished strength in some other quarter, or cut off some post of consequence at a great distance from the scene of action.[1]*

[1] Belm. i. 204, 205. Vict. et Conq. xx. 284, 285. Bessieres to Berthier, June 6, 1811. Belm. i. Appendix, No. 73.

Napoleon's new dispositions in Spain. July 9.

These threatening appearances in the north soon produced the most vigorous measures on the part of the French emperor to secure this, which, from the commencement of the war, he had always considered as the vital point of the Peninsula. The imperial guard, under Dorsenne, at Burgos, who soon after replaced Bessieres in the command of the army of the north, was augmented to seventeen thousand men; thirteen thousand were collected at Benavente to observe the Galicians under Santocildes, who were beginning to assume a threatening position at the mouths of their glens on that frontier; and nearly forty thousand fresh troops, chiefly old soldiers, crossed the Bidassoa and entered Spain. The great amount of these reinforcements, joined to the narrow escape which Badajoz had just made from falling

* "The army of the north is composed of forty-four thousand men it is true, but if you draw together twenty thousand, the communications are instantly lost, and the insurrection makes the greatest progress, The sea coasts will soon be lost as far as Bilboa. We are in want of every thing: in fact, it is with the utmost difficulty that we can get subsistence from day to day. The spirit of the country is frightful. The journey of the King to Paris, the retreat of the army from Portugal, its march to the Tagus, and the evacuation of the whole country, not even excluding Salamanca, have turned the heads of the people to a degree which I cannot express. The insurgents recruit and swell in all quarters with extraordinary activity. If I am obliged to adopt a decided line, you must not reckon on the communications. Vittoria, Burgos, and Valladolid are the only points which I can hold."—BESSIERES *to* BERTHIER, *Valladolid, 6th June* 1811. No. 73. BELMAS, i. 560. See also BELLIARD *to* BERTHIER, *Madrid, 3d June* 1811. *Ibid* i. 358.

into the hands of the British, induced Napoleon to make a material change in the distribution of his troops and the duties of his commanders. Marmont, withdrawn from the plains of Leon, which his troops had rendered a perfect desert, and the protection of Ciudad Rodrigo, which was confided to Dorsennē and the army of the north, was directed to take up his cantonments in the rich and comparatively unexhausted valley of the Tagus, from whence, without neglecting that fortress, he was to consider himself principally entrusted with the defence of Badajoz. For this purpose he was to station two divisions at Truxillo, ready to succour whichever place might be first threatened; to construct a double-fortified *tête-du-pont* at Almarez, so as to secure that valuable passage of the Tagus; and to fortify the Puerte de Banos, so as to be master of that important pass through the mountains. For the support of his troops the whole province of Toledo was assigned to Marmont, who immediately began forming magazines from it at Talavera, to the infinite mortification of Joseph, who thus saw his principal granary and means of subsistence entirely diverted from his capital and court. Soult was enjoined to hold himself in readiness to advance with thirty thousand men to raise the siege of Badajoz, if it should be again threatened by an English army; while Dorsenne, with the army of the north, now augmented to sixty thousand admirable troops, was entrusted with the onerous and irreconcilable duties of at once guarding the northern passes against the insurgents of Navarre and Biscay, and protecting Ciudad Rodrigo from the enterprises of the British general.[1]

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

[1] Napoleon to Marmont. July 10, 1811. Belm. i. No. 80, Appendix. and i. 194, 195.

While Marmont was carrying these fresh instructions, which he immediately did, into execution, and

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

busily engaged in constructing at Almarez the double forts at each end of the bridge, which was to secure the passage of the Tagus, Wellington, who constantly had an eye on the frontier fortresses, and felt that the recovery of one or both of them was essential to any durable impression on the Spanish territory, made a corresponding movement to the frontiers of Beira with the bulk of his forces. Leaving Hill with ten thousand infantry, fifteen hundred horse, and four brigades of artillery on the Estremadura frontier, at Portalegre and Villa Viciosa, he himself moved, with the remainder of his forces, about forty thousand strong, to the north of the Tagus, and marching leisurely by Castlebranco, arrived on the Coa, opposite Ciudad Rodrigo, on the 8th August.[1]

Wellington's movement to the north of Portugal.

July 21. Aug. 8. [1] Nap. iv. 224. Belm. i. 196.

The French general imagined that this movement was intended to co-operate with an advance which had recently taken place on the part of the Galicians under Santocildes, who had descended from their mountains into the plains of Leon, and reoccupied Astorga, when the general concentration of the Imperial forces for the relief of Badajoz left the northern provinces comparatively destitute of French troops. To defeat this supposed combination, Dorsenne resolved, in the first instance, to drive back the Spaniards, who were threatening his right flank; and this proved a task of no difficulty. The Galicians, destitute of every thing, and almost starving, had dwindled away to thirteen thousand ill-disciplined men, who were stationed behind the Esla, and at Foncebudon. Attacked, in the end of August, by Dorsenne with greatly superior forces, the Spaniards, after some sharp skirmishes, in which they were roughly handled by the French dragoons, were cut off from their magazines at Villa Franca and Lugo,

Defeat of the Galicians on the Esla. July 9.

and forced back into the mountains round the Val des Orres, on the Portuguese frontier. The alarm was excessive in Galicia; and nothing saved the whole province from falling into the hands of the invaders but the advance of Wellington to the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, which instantly checked the progress of the victorious French on the road to Lugo, and compelled Dorsenne, who had reoccupied Astorga, in which he now left an adequate garrison, to call in his detachments from all quarters to provide for the defence of that important fortress. In his retreat from Villa Franca to Astorga, the French general entirely devastated a line of country above twenty leagues in length: a barbarous measure, and as impolitic as it was cruel, as, by the admission of their own historians, it destroyed a part of the resources of their principal army.[1] CHAP. LXII. 1811.

[1] Tor. iv. 245, 249. Nap. iv. 224, 226. Belm. i. 196, 197. Vict. et Conq. xx. 287, 289.

Wellington's measures for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo

Though the march of the British from the banks of the Guadiana to those of the Coa was attended with this important collateral effect in rescuing Galicia, with its valuable harbours and naval establishments, from the grasp of the enemy, yet it was not the real object which Wellington had in view. Ostensibly undertaken to remove his troops from the sands of the Guadiana, so well known in the autumnal months to be fraught with death, to a more healthy region, he hoped to realize from it not only increased healthiness to his ranks, but additional security to the realm entrusted to his defence. It was on Ciudad Rodrigo that his heart was fixed; and the dispersed situation of the French armies charged with its defence, joined to the defective state of the supplies with which the garrison was furnished, inspired him with a well-grounded hope, that, by a sudden attack, it might be wrested from their hands. With this

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

view he had, with all imaginable secrecy, prepared a powerful battering train of iron guns at Lisbon, which, with a reinforcement of British artillerymen, recently arrived from England, were ostentatiously embarked at that harbour as if for Cadiz; but at sea they were shifted on board small craft, which brought them first to Oporto and then to Lamego, a hundred miles from the sea-coast, near the Douro, which being one of the great depots of the army, the arrival of the carts containing them excited little attention. The operation, however, of bringing sixty-eight heavy guns, with all their stores complete, up sixty miles of water-carriage, and then across nearly forty more of rough mountain roads, was one of no ordinary magnitude; five thousand bullocks and a thousand militia were employed in transporting the train, and repairing the roads for several weeks together; and nothing but the universal and indelible hatred which the cruelty and exactions of the French in that part of Spain had excited, could have prevented the transport of this great armament from coming to their knowledge. As it was, however, they remained entirely ignorant of what was going forward; the guns, by vast exertions, arrived safe at the place of their destination, and Wellington had the satisfaction of thinking that, unknown to the enemy, he had secured a powerful battering train within little more than sixty miles of Ciudad Rodrigo.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. July 18, 1811. Gurw. viii. 111. Nap. iv. 222, 224. Jones, ii. 28, 31.

Grounds of hope for a successful enterprise against that fortress.

The enterprise thus undertaken by Wellington was equally bold in conception, and cautiously provided for in execution. The battering train was brought forward, still unknown to the enemy, to Villa de Ponte, only sixteen leagues in rear of the army; Don Julian Sanchez, with his guerillas, had for some time past established a blockade of the for-

tress; while the Allied army remained in healthy cantonments on the high grounds around Fuente Guinaldo, almost within sight of its walls, ready at a moment's notice either to commence a siege, or move forward to protect the blockade. The fortress, it was known, had only provisions for six weeks; and though the French armies of Dorsenne, Marmont, and Soult could, by concentrating, bring ninety thousand men, or nearly double his own force, to its relief, yet the hopes of Wellington were founded upon the experienced impossibility of such a force being able, from want of provisions, to keep any time together; and though they might relieve it at a particular moment, he trusted that the time would erelong arrive when he might strike a successful blow during the time that they were still at a distance. The army was now greatly improved in health, in the highest spirits, and in admirable order: the reinforcements recently arrived from England had raised its numerical amount to forty-eight thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and seventy-two guns, besides the battering train: of this array, about forty-five thousand were under Wellington's own command; while the water-carriage in their rear enabled them constantly to keep together; and their central position went far, in the long run, to counterbalance the great superiority of force, which, by concentrating all their armies, the enemy might bring to bear against him.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 18, 1811. Gurw. viii. 111, 112. Jones, ii. 29, 30. Nap. iv. 219, 221.

This concentration of the Allied force in a position which constantly menaced Ciudad Rodrigo, was attended with this farther and most important advantage, that it entirely disconcerted a deep project which Napoleon had conceived at this period, and which Soult had warmly espoused, and was prepar-

Project of Napoleon for invading the Alentejo by Soult and Marmont.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

ing in the south the means of carrying into execution—viz., of invading Portugal with the combined armies of Marmont and the south, and transferring the seat of war into the Alentejo. This design, which was unquestionably the true mode of attacking Portugal, as it led by the shortest road to Lisbon, and took the famous defences of Torres Vedras in rear, is to be found fully developed in a despatch by the French emperor to Marmont, of date 18th September 1811. That marshal's force, which was estimated as likely then to amount to forty-one thousand men, was to be joined by several divisions of Soult's forces, of whom twenty thousand were still in Estremadura; and with the united force, above sixty-five thousand men, he was to besiege Elvas, and inundate the Alentejo. If Wellington, as a set-off against this irruption, moved against Salamanca and the army of the north, Dorsenne was to fall back to Valladolid, or even Burgos, where fifty thousand men would be assembled to stop his progress; if, as was deemed more probable, the English drew towards Lisbon, and descended the valley of the Tagus, Dorsenne was to follow them with twenty-five thousand men; and in either case Elvas, it was expected, would fall, and the French armies be placed in cantonments in the Alentejo about the same time that Suchet made himself master of Valencia. This well-conceived design, which perfectly coincided with what Soult had long been contemplating, was entirely based on the supposition that "the English had no heavy artillery for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo; for if that enterprise is once undertaken, you must march at once to its relief;"—a striking proof of the important effects consequent on the admirable stratagem by which the English general had already secured that

vital arm within a few days' march of the menaced fortress.[1]

1811.

Wellington, in the first instance, intended to have besieged Ciudad Rodrigo, as he conceived himself sufficiently strong to undertake that enterprise in the face of Marmont, and the succour of ten thousand men, which could alone, he conceived, be detached from the army of the north to its relief; and under this impression the preparations for the attack went on with great activity. He had not been many days, however, engaged in this undertaking, when he learned that nearly five-and-twenty thousand admirable troops were disposable around Dorsenne's standards. Upon this he changed his plan for the time to a blockade, and advanced his cavalry so as to straiten the fortress; while Almeida, in the rear, was put into a respectable posture of defence, in order to form a secure place of deposit for the battering train, still at Villa de Ponte, in case of disaster. No sooner did the French generals receive intelligence of the danger with which the fortress was threatened, than they assembled their forces, and collected supplies for its relief: Dorsenne, with infinite difficulty, and by the most rigorous exactions, got together nine hundred waggons laden with provisions for that purpose; and bringing down the divisions Vaendermaison and Souham from Navarre, put himself at the head of above thirty thousand soldiers to cover their entry. Marmont, at the same time, who had been strongly reinforced, and had now fifty thousand effective men around his eagles, in the valley of the Tagus, also collected a large convoy at Bejar, and advanced with a like body to form a junction with the army of the north. Their united forces, above sixty thousand strong, of whom six thousand

[1] Napoleon to Marmont, Sept. 18, 1811. Belm. i. App. No. 82.

Wellington turns the siege into a blockade, and French approach to raise the siege.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

were cavalry, with a hundred pieces of cannon, united at Tamanes, on the 21st September, and immediately advanced towards Ciudad Rodrigo, where Wellington, expecting their approach, had assembled all the forces, forty-five thousand strong, under his immediate command, to watch, and if possible prevent, their entrance.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811. Nap. iv. 229, 237. Belm. i. 197.

Approach of the two armies to Ciudad Rodrigo, which is revictualled.

Every man in both armies conceived that the decisive moment had now arrived, and that a pitched battle between these gallant antagonist hosts was now to determine the fate of the Peninsula. But the crisis passed over without any momentous occurrence: the hour of Spain's deliverance had not yet struck. Wellington was too sagacious to trust to doubtful hazard what he felt confident he would erelong accomplish by skill. Though with the noble army at his command he had no reason to dread a battle even against the superior forces of the French marshal; yet there were many reasons which rendered it inexpedient at this time to incur the hazard an engagement on such a scale would necessarily occasion even with the best troops. The position which he held in presence of Rodrigo was extensive, and therefore weak: the height of El Bodon in its centre, which was in front of the whole, was indeed strong, and Fuente Guinaldo had been improved by field works; but the wings, which occupied a great extent of country, were in the plain, where the enemy's great superiority in cavalry gave him a decided advantage; and the position, with the right wing alone across the Agueda, and the centre and left behind that river, was dangerous from the high banks which lined its sides, and the sudden floods to which in autumn it was subject. The English general, too, was well aware that want of provisions

must soon compel the vast array in his front to separate and return to their distant cantonments, and then he meditated a sudden attack with the heavy artillery, which, without their being aware of it, he had at hand. Still Wellington resolved to fight, if he could do so on terms at all approaching to equality; and for this purpose, without attempting to prevent the passage of the convoys, which entered on the 24th, he kept his troops on their ground, though with some hazard to the right wing, advanced beyond the river in order to compel the enemy to concentrate and show all his force, to protect that operation.[1]

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

Sept. 24. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 300, 301. Nap. iv. 236, 238.

When the French army approached the British, it was at first uncertain on which point they would direct their attack; but, after some hesitation, Monbrun, with fourteen battalions and thirty-five squadrons of splendid horsemen, crossed the Agueda by the bridge of Rodrigo and adjacent fords, and, pouring rapidly along the road, soon reached the heights of El Bodon. The British, at this point of their position, were not prepared for so sudden an onset; and while Wellington sent to Guinaldo for a brigade of the 4th division, Major-General Colville, the officer in command, was directed to draw up his little force, consisting of the 5th and 77th British regiments, and 21st Portuguese, with eight Portuguese guns and five squadrons of Alten's German dragoons, on the summit of the height, which was convex, towards the enemy, and secured on either flank by deep and rugged ravines. Though Picton, with the 4th division, made all imaginable haste to reach the scene of danger, the crisis had passed before he got up. On came Monbrun's cuirassiers like a whirlwind in spite of the severe cannonade,

Combat of El Bodon. Sept. 24.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

which tore their masses in a fearful manner, and dividing into two bodies when they reached the front of the hill, rode up the rugged sides of the ravines with the utmost fury, and were only checked by the steady fire of the guns and devoted intrepidity of the German horsemen at the summit, who, for three mortal hours, charged the heads of the squadrons as they ascended, and hurled them not less than twenty times, men and horses rolling over each other, back into the hollows. Monbrun, however, was resolute. His cavalry were numerous and daring; and by repeated charges and extreme gallantry, they at length got a footing on the top, and captured two of the guns, cutting down the brave Portuguese at their pieces; but the 5th regiment instantly rushed forward, though in line, into the midst of the horsemen, and retook their guns, which quickly renewed their fire; and at the same time the 77th and 21st Portuguese forced the horsemen down the steep on the other side. But though this phalanx of heroes thus made good their post, the advance of the enemy rendered it no longer tenable. A French division was rapidly approaching the only road by which they could rejoin the remainder of the centre at Fuente Guinaldo; and, despite all the peril of the movement, Wellington ordered them to descend the hill and cross the plain, six miles broad, to Fuente Guinaldo.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 301, 302. Nap. iv. 239, 240. Vict. et Conq. xx. 273. Lond. ii. 240. Beamish Germ. Leg. ii. 15.

If the observations of Plutarch be just, that it is not those actions which lead to the greatest results, so much as those in which the greatest heroism or magnanimity is displayed which are the most important subjects of history, never was a combat more deserving of remembrance than this extraordinary action. Descending from his rugged

Heroic steadiness of Colville's brigade.

post into the plain, the dauntless Colville formed his infantry into two squares; and the German dragoons, altogether unable to withstand the enormous mass of the French cavalry in the open plain, being obliged to take shelter behind the Portuguese regiment which was first in retreat, the foot soldiers in the rear, consisting of the 5th and 77th, denuded on all sides, were instantly enveloped by a whirlwind of horse. The thundering squadrons, with their scabbards clattering against each other, rending the air with their cries, shaking the ground beneath their feet, charged with apparently resistless force on three sides of the steady square; but vain, even in the bravest hands, is the sabre against the bayonet if equally firmly held. A rolling volley is heard, spreading out like a fan around the mass; the steeds recoil as from the edge of a glowing crater; in an instant the horsemen, scorched, reeling, and dismayed, are scattered on all sides as by the explosion of a volcano; "the glitter of bayonets is seen on the edge of the smoke; and the British regiments, unscathed, came forth like the holy men from the Assyrian furnace."[1]*

[1] Nap. iv. 239, 240. Lond. ii. 213, 214. Beamish, ii. 16. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 302.

Before the French could recover from this bloody repulse, Picton, who had used the utmost diligence to reach his comrades, joined the retreating squares; and the whole uniting together, retreated in admirable order for six miles over the arid plain, till they reached the position of Fuente Guinaldo, assigned for the general rendezvous in the rear. During this march was exhibited, in the most striking manner, the extraordinary steadiness which discipline and experience had given to each of the rival bodies. The British moved in close order with their flanks to the enemy, who, in great strength, rode on each

* Napier, iv. 240, has the chief merit of this glowing description.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

side within pistol-shot. With eager glance the officers and men of both armies, during this long and anxious march, eyed each other, watching for any incident or momentary confusion which might afford an opportunity for an attack, but none such occurred; and the British reached their destination without being again charged or molested, save by the firing of six pieces of horse-artillery which hung on the rear of their column, and poured in an incessant fire of round shot, grape, and canister.* Wellington now gave orders for concentrating his troops around Fuente Guinaldo. The light division was directed to retire across the Agueda and join the line, and the left, under Graham, to come up from the Azaza; but Craufurd, who commanded the former, eager for fighting, only came a few miles nearer, and was still sixteen miles off. Graham was twelve; and at night-fall only fifteen thousand men were collected in front

* "Picton, during this retreat, conducted himself with his accustomed coolness. He remained on the left flank of the column, and repeatedly cautioned the different battalions to mind the quarter-distance and the telling-off. 'Your safety,' said he, 'my credit, and the honour of the army, are at stake. All rests with you at this moment.' We had reached to within a mile of the intrenched camp, when Monbrun, impatient lest we should escape from his grasp, ordered his troopers to bring up their left shoulders, and incline towards our columns. The movement was not exactly bringing his squadron into line, but it was the next thing to it, and at this time they were within *half pistol-shot of us*. Picton took off his hat, and holding it over his eyes as a shade from the sun, looked sternly but anxiously at the French. The clatter of the horses, and the clanking of the scabbards was so great when the right half squadron moved up, that many thought it was the fore-runner of a general charge, and some of the mounted officers called out, 'Had we not better form square?' 'No,' replied Picton; 'it is but a *ruse* to frighten us, but it *won't do*.' And so in effect it proved. Each battalion in its turn formed the rearguard to stop the advance of the enemy, and having given them a volley, they fell back at double quick time behind the battalion formed in their rear."—*Reminiscences of a Subaltern*, p. 182, and PICTON'S *Memoirs*, ii. 37, 39.

of the French army, when a general battle was confidently expected by both parties.[1]

1811.

Marmont had now gained a great advantage over the English general; but he was ignorant of the inestimable prize which was almost within his grasp. On the morning of the 26th he had collected his whole army, sixty thousand strong, with one hundred and twenty guns, within cannon-shot of the British centre. Wellington's position was now most critical; for, as neither his right nor left wing had come up, he had not more than fifteen thousand men at his disposal to resist the overwhelming force of the enemy; and retreat he would not, for that would be to abandon Craufurd and the light division to destruction. He accordingly stood firm, and the troops anxiously gazed on the enemy, expecting a decisive battle. The array which Marmont drew forth was indeed splendid, and calculated to inspire the most elevated ideas of the power of the French empire. The enormous mass of cavalry, seven thousand strong, whose gallantry the Allies had felt on the preceding day, stood in compact array before them; next came different bodies of infantry and artillery, above twenty-five thousand strong, who went through various evolutions with extraordinary precision: at noon twelve battalions of the imperial guard stood forth in close column, and by their martial air, admirable array, and bloody overhanging plumes, attracted universal attention. During the whole day, horse, foot, and cannon never ceased to pour into the French camp, and every thing was made ready for an attack the next day on the British position. But Shakspeare's tide in the affairs of men, was never more strikingly exemplified than on this occasion. While Marmont, in the vain confidence of irresistible strength, was thus making a

[1] Nap. iv. 241, 242. Lond. ii. 214, 215. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 302.

Imminent danger of the British army at Fuente Guinaldo.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

useless display of his forces, when Wellington, with three divisions only, lay before him, the precious hours, never to be recalled, passed away; reinforcements came rapidly in to the English line; at three o'clock the light division came up; and the object for which the position of Fuente Guinaldo had been held being now accomplished, a retreat was by the English general ordered in the night to a new position much stronger, because narrower than the former, in the rear, where the Allied army was now concentrated between the Coa and the sources of the Agueda; and the plumes of the imperial guard were not again seen by the British army till they waved over the fall of the empire on the field of Waterloo.[1]*

1 Nap. iv. 241, 243. Lond. ii. 215, 217. Beamish, ii. 18. Gurw. viii. 302, 303.

Both armies go into cantonments.

The British right wing retired by two roads on Albergaria and Aldea del Ponte, while the left fell back to Bismula; and with such regularity was the retreat conducted, that not only no sick or stragglers, but not even an article of baggage, was left behind. By a strange coincidence, but of which a more memorable instance occurred afterwards in the Moscow retreat, the French army at the same moment was also retiring; and for some hours these two gallant hosts were literally marching with their backs to each other! As soon as the British retreat was discovered, the French wheeled about and moved back in pursuit; but, before they could come up with the English army, the new ground was taken. A sharp action ensued at Aldea del Ponte, where a French column attacked a brigade of the 4th division, but was quickly repulsed; and the British, assuming the

Sept. 27.

* "When Marmont next day was informed of the slender amount of force which lay before him at Fuente Guinaldo on the 26th, and that the light division had not come up, he exclaimed—'And, Wellington, thy star too is bright!'"—NAPIER, iv. 248.

offensive, drove the enemy out of the village, which was held till the whole army had reached its destined ground, when the French again returned, and it was evacuated with some loss. On the 28th, Wellington retired a league farther, to a very strong and narrow position in front of the Coa, where he meant to give battle, even with all the risk of fighting with a river edged by rocky banks in his rear. As it was, however, neither the strength nor the danger of the position was put to the test. Marmont, who was already severely pinched for provisions, retired towards Ciudad Rodrigo the same day, and shortly after passed the Puerte de Banos, and resumed his old quarters on the banks of the Tagus; while Dorsenne retreated to Salamanca and the Douro, and Wellington put his troops into cantonments on both banks of the Coa, the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo being resumed by Don Julian Sanchez and the British light cavalry.[1]

Sept. 28.

[1] Gurw. viii. 304, 305. Nap. iv. 243, 245. Lond. ii. 217, 227. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 19, 21.

In these brilliant actions the Allies sustained a loss of about three hundred men; that of the French was more than double this number, owing to the rapidity and precision of the fire of the infantry on their dense squadrons at El Bodon, and on the retreat to Guinaldo. The most heroic yet generous spirit animated both armies, of which an interesting instance occurred in one of the cavalry encounters. A French officer was in the act of striking at the brave Captain Felton Harvey of the 14th dragoons, when, seeing he had only one arm, he quickly let his sword fall to a salute, and passed on. Major Gordon,* who had been sent by Wellington with a flag of truce to Marmont's headquarters, was hospitably received by the French marshal, with whom he frequently dined, and often accompanied on his rides round the

Courtesy shown on both sides during these operations.

* Brother to the Earl of Aberdeen.

CHAP. LXII. 1811. Oct. 15.

outposts, on which occasions the prospects of the campaign and the qualities of the troops on both sides were freely discussed; and General Regnaud, governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, having fallen soon after into an ambuscade laid by the indefatigable Don Julian Sanchez, and been made prisoner, he became a frequent guest at Wellington's table, where he occasioned no small entertainment by the numerous anecdotes he related of the French generals and armies. Such is war between brave nations, by whom all feelings of hostility are invariably laid aside, and glide into those of peculiar courtesy, the moment the individual ceases to act in the hostile ranks.[1]

[1] Nap. iv. 225, 230. Nap. iv. 252, 254.

Re-occupation of Asturias by Bonnet, and concentration of French forces at Valladolid and Burgos.

The Allied army, which had been unhealthy during the whole campaign, became doubly so when the troops went into cantonments; and they had not been at rest a fortnight before the sick had augmented to above seventeen thousand, the usual effect of the sudden cessation of active operations on men whose bilious secretions had been greatly increased by the long continuance of fatigue in warm weather, and which, now no longer exhaling in perspiration, induced fevers. The French, however, were nearly as unhealthy; and the penury of subsistence on the Portuguese frontier rendered it absolutely impossible for their generals to undertake any operation of importance. Dorsenne, in the north, took advantage of this intermission of active operations on the Portuguese

Nov. 1811.

frontier, to push Bonnet, with a strong division, into the Asturias, who without difficulty surmounted the passes of Cubillas and Ventana, which had been left unguarded by the enemy, and re-occupied Oviedo, Gihon, and all the principal posts in the country. This expedition, joined to the pressing necessity of subduing the insurrection in the northern provinces,

CHAP. LXII.

1811.

and the dark clouds which were arising in the north, led, in December, to a fresh disposition of the Imperial forces. Marmont received orders to establish his headquarters at Valladolid; Dorsenne was to retire to Burgos, and occupy strongly Biscay and Navarre; while the Imperial guard was transferred to Burgos, where it was to hold itself in readiness to march into France: a series of arrangements which already revealed the secret views of Napoleon for a Russian campaign.[1]

[1] Gurw. viii. 384. Belm. i. 203, 204. Berthier to Joseph, Dec. 13, 1811. Ibid. Appendix, No. 84. Lond. ii. 225, 226.

This concluded the campaign of 1811, so far as the operations of the principal armies were concerned; but several important operations occurred with detached corps, which, like the red hue of the evening sky, already gave presage of the glorious dawn.

The first of these events was the surprise of Gerard's division at Aroyos de Molinos on the 28th of October.

Surprise of Gerard at Aroyos de Molinos. Oct. 28.

When Wellington concentrated his army at Fuente Guinaldo to oppose Marmont and Dorsenne, Hill was left in the northern part of Estremadura to watch Drouet, who remained opposite to him in that country. After a variety of marches and countermarches, which led to no result, both generals having orders not to fight unless an opportunity should occur of doing so to advantage, Hill received intelligence, on the 27th October, that Gerard, with three thousand infantry and cavalry belonging to Drouet's corps, lay at Aroyos de Molinos, in such a situation as to be liable, by a sudden cross march, to a surprise from the English troops. That able officer instantly made his dispositions; by a forced march he reached Aluescar, four miles from where Gerard lay, before nightfall, and passed the early part of the night in bivouac, without permitting any light to be made,

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

or the slightest sound to escape which might lead the French patrols to suspect their vicinity. At two in the morning he broke up, and, advancing swiftly and silently, got close to the road by which he knew the enemy would march out on the following morning, yet concealed from their view by an intervening ridge. In that position they awaited the break of day, and as soon as the grey of the dawn appeared, the column divided into parts; the right, under General Howard, by a wide circuit into the rear of the town by which the French were to retreat, the left, under General Stewart, directly on the town from the Aluescar road. The latter column was to attack first; and it was hoped that the enemy, dislodged by a sudden attack from the town, would be completely destroyed by falling into the jaws of Howard's men on their line of retreat.[1]

[1] Jones, ii. 39, 41. Nap. iv. 321, 322. Hill's Despatch, Oct. 30, 1811. Gurw. viii. 372.

Total defeat of the French.

On this occasion the British felt the benefit of that unbounded confidence and attachment with which they had inspired the Spanish peasantry; for though the whole inhabitants of Aluescar and its vicinity knew perfectly of the arrival and the object which they had in view, not a man betrayed the secret, and Stewart's columns were within gunshot of the enemy before they were aware of their approach. Favoured by a thick mist and deluge of rain, the troops entered Aroyos, with drums suddenly beating and loud cheers, so unexpectedly, that the cavalry pickets were rushed upon before they had time to mount; and the infantry, who were under arms, beginning to muster, were so confounded, that, after a desultory struggle, they fled precipitately out of the town,* leaving a

* The 71st and 92d regiments, both Highland, led the attack in the town; and they entered with the bagpipe at their head playing the celebrated Jacobite air, "Hey, Johnnie Cope are you waking yet?"

great many of their number prisoners. Once outside, however, they formed two squares, and endeavoured to resist; but while a brisk firing was going on between their rear and Stewart's men pressing on in pursuit, Howard's column suddenly appeared directly in their rear on the great road to Truxillo, and no alternative remained but to surrender or break and seek safety by climbing the steep and rugged sides of the Sierra on their flank. Gerard,* however, who was a gallant officer as well as skilful, though surprised on this occasion, for some time made a brave resistance; but seeing his guns taken by the 15th dragoons, and his hussars dispersed with great slaughter by the 9th dragoons and German hussars, he became aware that his situation was desperate, and gave the word to disperse. Instantly the squares broke, and all the men, throwing away their arms, ran as fast as their legs could carry them towards the most rugged and inaccessible part of the Sierra. Swiftly as they fled, however, the British pursued as quickly; the Highlanders, at home among the rocks and scaurs, secured prisoners at every step; the 28th and 34th followed rapidly on the footsteps of the flying mass; the 39th turned them by the Truxillo road; and Gerard himself, after displaying the greatest intrepidity, only escaped by throwing himself into rugged cliffs, where the British, encumbered with their arms, could not follow him. He joined Drouet, by devious mountain-paths, at Orellano on the 9th November, with only six hundred followers, without arms and in woful plight, the poor remains of three thousand superb troops who were around his eagles

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

in allusion to the well-known incident of that commander, in the conflict with the Highlanders under the Pretender, at Prestonpans in 1745.

* Since Marshal Gerard, Minister at War to Louis-Philippe, who besieged and took the citadel of Antwerp in 1832.

CHAP. LXII.

1811.

at Aroyos de Molinos, and were esteemed the best brigade in Spain. General Bron and Prince D'Aremberg, with thirteen hundred prisoners, three guns, and the whole baggage of the enemy, fell into the hands of the victors.[1]

[1] Hill's Desp. Oct. 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 374, 375. Jones, ii. 40, 41. Nap. iv. 322, 324. Vict. et Conq. xx. 275, 277.

This brilliant success, which was achieved with the loss only of twenty killed and wounded, diffused the highest satisfaction through the whole British army; and shortly after the health of the troops was materially improved, by a considerable portion of them being moved into better supplied and more comfortable quarters on the banks of the Mondego and the Douro. The sick daily diminished, the spirits of the men rose, and soon the hospitals were relieved of half their inmates. Meanwhile, Wellington took none of the rest to himself which he allowed to his troops: with unwearied industry he laboured incessantly at the improvement of the transport service, which was soon put on a much more efficient footing, and the forwarding of stores and ammunition to the front, which clearly showed that Ciudad Rodrigo was erelong to be besieged. In spite of all his vigilance, however, the enemy contrived to throw more than one convoy into that fortress, and in the end the blockade was almost abandoned from finding that the investing force was more straitened for provisions than the invested. Wellington, however, did not care for the introduction of these supplies, as all his efforts had long been directed to besieging the place in form; for which purpose he had already prepared, with infinite pains and secresy, a portable bridge, which was to be thrown, for the passage of the stores, over the Agueda, and rendered the Douro navigable for boats as far up as its junction with that river, forty miles higher than they had ever yet

Improvement in the health of the British army in their cantonments.

Nov. 9.

ascended. But ere the season for striking the meditated blow arrived, new and cheering advices had arrived from the south of Spain.[1]

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

[1] Jones, ii. 37, 39. Lond. ii. 236, 240.

Ballasteros, after his embarkation at Ayamonte, subsequent to the battle of Albuera, had landed in the south of Spain, where he had drawn several thousand recruits to his standard; but being unable to withstand the powerful force which Soult directed against him, he had more than once taken refuge under the cannon of Gibraltar. Meanwhile, the English Government, desirous of alimenting the war thus energetically revived in the southern extremity, dispatched a body of two thousand men, of whom five hundred were British, who took possession of TARIFA, an ancient town situated on the most southerly extremity of Spain, nearer to the African coast than even the celebrated Pillars of Hercules, and surrounded by an old wall without wet ditch or outworks. Soult, who was well aware how narrowly the besieging force at Cadiz had escaped destruction from the combination which the Allies had brought to bear upon them at the time of the battle of Barossa, resolved to dislodge them from this position; and the fortifications were so extremely weak that hardly any resistance was expected. Godinot, accordingly, with eight thousand men, having driven Ballasteros under the cannon of Gibraltar, received orders to turn aside and besiege this stronghold. In the march thither, however, he was so raked in traversing the road, which ran along the sea-shore, by the broadsides of the English ships of war which hung on his flank, that, after sustaining a severe loss, he abandoned the enterprise in despair, and returned to Seville: where, unable to bear the

French expedition against Tarifa, which fails. Oct. 14, and Oct. 27.

CHAP. LXII.

warm reproaches of Soult, who was irritated at his repeated failures, he blew out his brains.[1]

1811.

Soult, who was not to be diverted from his design, with the importance of which he was now fully impressed by this failure, now prepared an expedition against Tarifa on a larger scale, and entrusted the command to a very distinguished officer, General Laval, who approached its walls at the head of seven thousand men in the middle of December, while two other divisions of three thousand each came up, one from Cadiz, the other from Ronda. This formidable accumulation of force compelled Ballasteros again to take shelter in the lines of Gibraltar, and obliged Skerret, who commanded the Allied force, to await the enemy's arrival within the walls, where he had eighteen hundred British, and seven hundred Spaniards; and the English engineers, with great skill, constructed interior retrenchments on the side most likely to be assailed, so as to render the assault of the wall the least difficulty which the enemy would have to encounter. The houses within the place expected to be breached were loopholed, the streets barricaded, and an old tower, which commanded the whole town, armed with heavy artillery, at once to send a storm of grape on the assailants, and secure the retreat of the garrison to their ships, which lay in the bay. These precautions, though judicious, were not, however, put to the test. Laval broke ground before the place on the 19th December; and so completely were the anticipations of the British engineers realized, that they did so exactly on the spot where they were expected, and behind which the preparations had been made. The approaches were pushed with great rapidity; the battering guns, which

Vict. et Conq. xx. 271, 272. Tor. iv. 298. Jones, ii. 42, 43. Nap. iv. 329, 330.

Second expedition against, and siege of Tarifa.

Dec. 19.

Dec. 27.

opened their fire on the 27th, soon brought the old wall down; and by the 30th the breach was sixty feet wide and of easy ascent. But the British regiments were on the ramparts, each at its proper post; the 47th and a Spanish battalion guarded the breach; the 84th and rifles were dispersed round the walls.[1] Little aware of the quality of the antagonists with whom they had to deal, a column of 2000 French commenced the assault at daylight on the 31st. Such, however, was the vigour of the fire kept up upon them from every part of the rampart where a musket or gun could be brought to bear on the mass, that it broke before reaching the wall, and the troops arrived at the foot of the breach in great disorder. Part tried to force their way up, part glided down the bed of a stream which flowed through the town, and a few brave men reached the bars of the portcullis which debarred entrance above the waters. But the British soldiers now sent down such a crashing volley on the throng at the iron grate, and at the foot of the breach, that they dispersed to the right and left, seeking refuge under any projecting ground from the intolerable musketry. The combat continued for some time longer, the French, with their usual gallantry, keeping up a quick irregular discharge on the walls; but the ramparts streamed forth fire with such violence, and the old tower sent such a tempest of grape through their ranks, that, after sustaining a dreadful loss, they were forced to retreat, while a shout of victory, mingled with the sound of musical instruments, passed round the walls of the town. This bloody repulse suspended for some days the operations of the besiegers, who confined themselves to a cannonade; and meanwhile the rain fell in such tor-

[1] Nap. iv. 330, 334. Belm. iv. 17, 31. Jones, ii. 43, 44. Vict. et Conq. xx. 279, 280.

Defeat of the assault, and raising of the siege Dec. 31.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

rents, and sickness made such ravages in their ranks, that, according to their own admission, "the total dissolution of their army was anticipated." Laval persevered some days longer against his own judgment, in obedience to the positive injunctions of Victor, and the breach was so wide from the continued fire that a fresh assault was expected; but on the 4th he raised the siege, and retreated in dreadful weather, having first drowned his powder and buried his heavy artillery. In this expedition, one of the most disastrous to their arms which occurred in the whole Peninsular war, the French lost their whole cavalry and artillery horses, and about five hundred men by the sword, besides an equal number by sickness and starvation, while the total loss of the Allies did not exceed one hundred and fifty.[1]

1 Belm. iv. 33, 39. Nap. iv. 336, 338. Jones, ii. 44, 45. Vict. et Conq. xx. 280.

General results of this campaign.

The campaign of 1811, less momentous in its issue than that which preceded it, when the great struggle of Torres Vedras was brought to a conclusion; and less brilliant in its results than the one which followed, when the decisive overthrow of Salamanca loosened the foundations of French power over the whole of Spain;—was yet of most important consequences in the deliverance of the Peninsula. It is not at once that the transition is made from disaster to success. Victory is of as slow growth, if it is to be durable, to nations, as wealth to individuals. To turn the stream—to change the gales of fortune—to convert the torrent of disaster into the tide of conquest, is the real difficulty—to make the first hundred pounds, often costs more to the poor aspirant after opulence than to make the next thousand. During the campaign of Salamanca, this first hundred was made. For the first time since the British standards appeared in Spain, something approaching

an equality had been attained between the contending forces. The advantages of a central position, and of water carriage in his rear, had counterbalanced the still decided superiority of number; and Wellington, with his 60,000 British and Portuguese soldiers, appeared on the offensive in the midst of 150,000 enemies. True, he had hitherto been foiled in his efforts; true, the siege of Badajoz had been raised; that of Ciudad Rodrigo prevented; the blood of Albuera had, to all appearance, streamed in vain; but, to the discerning eye which looked beyond the surface of things, these very disappointments were fraught with future hope. The British army had, throughout, taken the initiative and preserved the offensive. By slight demonstrations they had put in motion the enemy's forces in every part of Spain. The war, throughout, had been maintained in his territories, and all insult to the Portuguese frontier averted. These enterprises had been rendered abortive only by accumulating against the English army the whole of the disposable force in the south-west and north of Spain. The tide of conquest had been arrested; the consolidation of the French power prevented in other quarters by these repeated concentrations; the desolation of the country precluded the possibility of such large masses continuing for any length of time together; and it was easy to see that, if circumstances should enable the British Government to augment, or compel the French Emperor to diminish their respective forces in the Peninsula, the scale would erelong turn to the other side. The balance in military as well as in political affairs, generally quivers for a time before it inclines decisively to a new side.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

But, what was still more important, this campaign

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

was productive, to all concerned in the British army, of one advantage of more ultimate value than any which they had hitherto gained—a sense of their own deficiencies. This invaluable acquisition, of such tardy growth to nations as well as individuals, had been forced alike upon the army, the officers, and the Government, by its events. The soldiers saw that mere valour, though it might win a field, could hardly decide a campaign; that the loud murmur at retreat which forced on the carnage of Albuera, might be drowned in blood; and that the true soldier is he who, ready to fight to the last extremity when the occasion demands, is equally patient and docile in every other duty till that season has arrived. The officers learned that war is at once a difficult science and a practical art; that minute attention to details is indispensable to its perfection; and that the bluntness of intrenching tools, the failure of supplies, or ill-regulated sallies of valour in the field, may often mar the best concerted enterprises. The Government felt the necessity of straining every nerve to aid their zealous general in the contest: reinforcements to a large amount arrived before the close of the campaign, though, unhappily, the uniform unhealthiness of the soldiers on first landing prevented their swelling, as might have been expected, the ranks of the army; and as much specie as could possibly be drawn together, though it was but little, was forwarded for its use. By the incessant efforts of Wellington, every department, both in the British and Portuguese service, was put on a better footing during the campaign: the Government at Lisbon were at length induced to take the requisite steps to recruit the ranks which had been so fearfully thinned by the fatigues and the sickness of the

The British government and army learned their own deficiencies in this campaign.

Torres Vedras campaign; the engineer and commissariat service were essentially improved, and all that had been found awanting obtained from England; the transport and ordnance trains put on a much improved footing, and the military hospitals relieved of many of those evils which had hitherto been so fatal to the lives of the soldiers. Before the close of the campaign, eighty-four thousand men stood on the rolls of the Allied army, of whom fifty-six thousand were British, and twenty-eight thousand Portuguese; and though, from the extraordinary sickness of the troops, the number in the field never exceeded fifty-seven thousand, yet the prevailing epidemics rapidly diminished when the cool weather came on; and every thing announced that, before the next campaign opened, seventy thousand would be present with the standards of Wellington. Finally, the provident care of their chief had materially strengthened the interior defences of the kingdom. The lines of Torres Vedras had been augmented; new ones near Almada, on the southern bank, constructed on a gigantic scale; and such were the preparations made at Lisbon, that the English general contemplated without anxiety an event generally thought probable, and publicly announced in the French newspapers, that the Emperor himself was coming to finish the war, by a clap of thunder, on the Tagus.[1]

[1] Nap. xx. 229, 233. Lond. ii. 236, 237. Gurw. viii. 222.

Though this design was announced, however, it was no part of Napoleon's intention really to put himself at the head of such an armament. His secret despatches to Joseph, now in great part published by authority of the French War Office,* contain no trace of any such design; the great reinforcements which

Napoleon's real intentions at this period in regard to the war in Portugal.

* See BELMAS, *Journaux des Sieges dans la Peninsule*, vol. i., App. No. 47 to 92.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

he poured into the country in autumn were intended only to compensate the immense losses of the Torres Vedras campaign, and re-establish on a secure basis the interrupted communications in the northern provinces. Napoleon neither contemplated nor desired any thing more, at this period, than the re-establishment of the credit of his arms by the capture of Elvas, and the relief of his finances by the quartering of the army of Portugal in the hitherto untouched fields of plunder of the Alentejo.[1] It was upon Russia and the north of Europe that the whole attention of the Emperor was now fixed: the war in Portugal he regarded as a useful auxiliary, which might exhaust the English resources, engross their military force, and prevent them from sending any effectual aid, either in men or money, to the decisive points on the banks of the Niemen.*—In this view, the balanced success of the campaign of 1811, the constant predictions of the Opposition party in England, that Great Britain must finally succumb in

[1] Berthier to Marmont, Sept. 18, 1811. Belm. i. 585, 587.

* Napoleon's real views at this period were, with more candour than he usually exhibited on such occasions, divulged in his address to the Legislative Body on June 18, 1811.—"Since 1809 the greater part of the strong places in Spain have been taken after memorable sieges, and the insurgents have been beaten in a great number of pitched battles. England has felt that the war is approaching a termination, and that intrigues and gold are no longer sufficient to nourish it: she has found herself obliged, therefore, to alter the nature of her assistance, and from an auxiliary she has become a principal. All her troops of the line have been sent to the Peninsula: English blood has at length flowed in torrents in several actions glorious to the French arms. This conflict with Carthage, which seemed as if it would be decided on fields of battle, on the ocean, or beyond the seas, will henceforth be decided on the plains of Spain. When *England shall be exhausted*—when she shall at last have felt the evils which, for twenty years, she has with so much cruelty poured upon the Continent; when half her families shall be in mourning; then shall a peal of thunder put an end to the affairs of the Peninsula, the destinies of her armies, and avenge Europe and Asia by finishing this second Punic war."—*See Moniteur*, 16th June 1811.

the Peninsular struggle, and the brilliant career of Marshal Suchet in Valencia at the same period, were eminently conducive to the ultimate deliverance of Europe; by inspiring the French Emperor with the belief that all danger was now over in that quarter, or would speedily be removed by the accession of the Whigs to office on the termination of the Regency restrictions, and, consequently, that he might safely pursue the phantom of universal empire even to the edge of the Russian snows.

CHAP. LXII. 1811.

CHAPTER LXIII.

FIRST INVASION OF SPAIN BY WELLINGTON, JAN.—NOV. 1812.

ARGUMENT.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

First Invasion of Spain by Wellington, January to November 1812—Vast Power and Resources of Napoleon at this period—Remarkable Prediction of Napoleon's approaching Fall at the same time—Commencement at this Period of the Fall of the French Empire—Wellington prepares to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo —Commencement of the Operations—Rapid Progress of the Siege—Aspect of both Sides before the Assault—The Third Division carry the great Breach—Storm of the lesser Breach—Hideous disorders consequent on the Storm—Vast importance of this Capture—Agitation it produced among the French Generals—Secret Preparations made against Badajoz—Movement of the British Army towards that Fortress—Preparations for the Siege—Its Commencement—Storming of Picurina—Plan of Attack of the Fortress itself—Philippon's Preparations of Defence—Unsuccessful Assault of the great Breaches—Terrific struggle at their Base —The Castle is assaulted by Picton—The town is at length carried—Walker's Division also gets in by Escalade—Wellington's Conduct during the Assault—Magnitude and importance of this Conquest—Soult advances from Andalusia, and retreats to it—Marmont's Irruption into Beira—Wellington moves to the Agueda—His efforts in his Cantonments to supply the Fortresses taken—Napoleon's anger at the Fall of Badajoz—Incorporation of Catalonia with the French Empire—Reduction in the French Force in the Peninsula—Spirit and Character of the Allied Army at this period—Description of the French Forts at the Bridge of Almarez—Hill's Preparations for their Attack—Storming of the Forts—Mirabete is saved by a False Alarm, and Hill returns to Badajoz—Defeat of Ballasteros in Andalusia—Defensive Measures taken in Estremadura—Wellington's Preparations for the Invasion of Spain—Soult's Plans at this period—Forces of the French in Spain—Advance of Wellington to Salamanca—Siege of the Forts there—Marmont's ineffectual Attempt to raise the Siege—Capture of the Forts—Marmont retires behind the Douro—His able Movements, and Wellington's Retreat—Wellington's Difficulties from the Slowness of the Spaniards—And Lord William Bentinck's Failure in the projected Co-operation—Wellington Retreats across the Guarena—Repulse of a Cavalry Attack at Castrillo—Movements on both Sides during the Retreat to San Christoval—The British retreat to the Neighbourhood of Salamanca—Critical Situation of the English Army—Movements of both Armies immediately before the Battle—False Movement of the French left—Wellington's dispositions of Attack—French Dispositions and Commencement of the Battle—Progress of the Action, and Wound of Marmont—

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Total Defeat of the French left under Thomieres—Splendid Charge of the British Cavalry on Foy's division—Repulse of the British at the Centre, and of the French at Arapeilles—Wellington and Beresford restore the Battle in the Centre—Last Stand and Final Defeat of the French—Wellington pursues in the wrong Direction—Results of the Battle—Brilliant Charge of the German Dragoons on the French Rearguard—Rapid Retreat of the French to Valladolid—Retreat of Joseph towards Madrid, and Action at Majalahonda—Consternation which prevailed in that Capital—Entry of the English into Madrid, and enthusiastic Joy which prevailed—Measures—Attack on and Reduction of the Retiro—Great amount of Warlike Stores found there—And importance of the Central Position which the English had now acquired in Spain—Able Views of Soult at this period for the Re-establishment of Affairs—Refusal of Suchet to send any Succour to Joseph—Operations of Hill and Drouet in Estremadura and La Mancha—Wellington moves to the North to press upon Clausel—The French retire to Burgos—Description of the Castle there, and the French Works around it—Commencement of the Siege and Storming of the Hornwork of Saint Michael—Repeated unsuccessful Assaults—Storming of the Outer Intrenchments—Increasing Difficulties of the Besiegers from the Want of Artillery—Wellington's resolution to retire, and Causes of the Failure of the Attack—Operations of Hill in the Centre of Spain—He evacuates Madrid, and retreats towards Salamanca—Increasing Difficulties of Wellington's Retreat—Junction of his Army and Hill's—Junction of Soult and Clausel's Force—Wellington offers Battle, which is refused—He retreats to Ciudad Rodrigo—Extraordinary Hardships and Losses of that Retreat—The Army is put into Winter Quarters—Acrimonious Address of Wellington to his Officers—Its effect on the Troops—Operations in the South and East of Spain—Landing of the British Force at Alicante—Battle of Castello, and Defeat of Suchet—Want of Vigour with which this Success was followed up by the British General—Operations in Catalonia during the Campaign, and in Asturias and Biscay—General Result of the Campaign—Its vast Effect in loosening the French Power in the Peninsula—Wellington's great Merits in the Conduct of it—Immense advantages gained by the Allies—Reaction upon themselves of the French mode of making war.

THE close of the year 1811 and commencement of 1812, witnessed the elevation of the power of Napoleon to its highest point; and such was the magnitude of the forces then at his disposal, and the paralysis which had seized the minds of men from the unbroken career of his success, that his empire appeared established on a foundation which could never be shaken. Every continental state had successively attempted to combat it, and every one had been overthrown in the struggle: The alliance of Russia and Austria in 1805, of Russia and Prussia in 1806, of

Vast power and resources of Napoleon at this period.

CHAP. LXIII.

1812. Spain and Austria in 1809, had been alike unable to restrain the rapid and portentous growth of his power. From pacific repose he rose up, like a giant refreshed by sleep, more formidable in numbers and organization than when the last strife terminated; from war-like struggles he emerged conquering and to conquer. It was hard to say whether his power had risen more rapidly in peace or in war; it was difficult to see what limit could be imposed to the growth of an empire to which the former brought only an increase of hostile preparations; the latter, an enlargement of pacific resources. The systematic exertions of military monarchies, the tumultuous array of popular enthusiasm, had been alike overthrown in the strife. Little could be hoped from the former, when the heroism of Aspern had failed; nothing expected from the latter, when the devotion of Saragossa had been subdued. The hopes awakened by the retreat from Torres Vedras had been chilled by subsequent disasters; the subjugation of the east of Spain seemed to presage the speedy concentration of an overwhelming force against the battalions of Wellington in the west; and if he succumbed, nothing remained, from the shores of the Vistula to the Pillars of Hercules, capable of combating the French power, or resisting the Imperial will. A general despair, in consequence, seized upon the public mind over all Europe. Even the bravest hearts hesitated as to the ultimate issue of a contest in which former continental effort had terminated only in disaster; and many ages of military servitude were regarded by the strongest heads as the inevitable destiny of Europe, to be overthrown, perhaps, at last only by a fresh deluge of northern barbarians.*

* "These cursed, double cursed news, have sunk my spirits so

CHAP. LXIII.

1812.

It was at this dark and mournful period, that a member of the Church of England thus addressed a British congregation: "There is a limit, my brethren, to human suffering; there is an hour in oppression when resolution springs from despair. There are bounds in the moral as well as the material system to the dominion of evil; there are limits to the injustice of nations as well as the guilt of individuals. There is a time, when cunning ceases to delude and hypocrisy to deceive; when power ceases to overawe, and oppression will no longer be borne. To that hour, to that avenging hour, Time and Nature are approaching. The cup of bitterness is full, and there is a drop which will make it overflow. Unmarked

Remarkable prediction of Napoleon's approaching fall at this period. Feb. 28, 1811.

much, that I am almost at disbelieving a providence. God forgive me! But I think some evil demon has been permitted in the shape of this tyrannical monster, whom God has sent on the nations visited in his anger. The Spaniards may have Roman pride, but they want Roman talent to support it; and in short, unless God in his mercy should raise up amongst them one of those extraordinary geniuses, who seem created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I see no hope. The spring-tide may, for aught I know, break upon us in the next session of Parliament. There is an evil fate upon us in all we do at home or abroad."—Sir Walter Scott *to* Ellis, 13*th December* 1808, *and September* 14 1809.—Lockhart's *Life of* Scott, ii. 225, 227, 253.

To the same purpose, Sir James Mackintosh said, at this period, writing to Gentz at Vienna:—"I believe, like you, in a resurrection, because I believe in the immortality of civilisation; but when, and by whom, in what form, are questions which I have not the sagacity to answer, and on which it would be boldness to hazard a conjecture. A dark and stormy night, a black series of ages, may be prepared for our posterity before the dawn that opens the more perfect day. Who can tell how long that fearful night may be before the dawn of a brighter morrow? The race of man may reach the promised land: but there is no assurance that the present generation will not perish in the wilderness. The mischief has become too intricate to be unravelled in our day. An evil greater than despotism, even in its worst and most hideous form, approaches—a monarchy literally universal seems about to be established."—Mackintosh *to* Gentz, 24*th December* 1806; *and to* William Ogilvie, *Esq.*, 24*th February* 1808.—*Memoirs of* Mackintosh, i. 307 and 383.

Dec. 24, 1806, 1807.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

as it may be amidst the blaze of military glory, the dread Hand is yet writing on the wall the sentence of its doom: the hour is steadily approaching when evil will be overcome with good, and when the life-blood of an injured world will collect at the heart, and by one convulsive effort throw off the load that has oppressed it. It is impossible that the oppressed can longer beckon the approach of a power which comes only to load them with heavier chains: it is impossible that the nations of Europe, cradled in civilisation and baptised into the liberty of the children of God, can long continue to bend their freeborn heads before the feet of foreign domination; or that they can suffer the stream of knowledge which has so long animated their soil, to terminate at last in the deep stagnation of military despotism. Even the oppressor bleeds in the hour that he triumphs: his people are goaded to exertions which they loathe: his laurels are wet with the tears of those who have been bereaved of their children. For years, our attention has been fixed on that great and guilty country which has been fertile in nothing but revolution; and from which, amidst the clouds that cover it, we have seen that dark and shapeless form arise, which, like the visions that appalled the king of Babylon, 'hath its legs of iron and its arms of brass.' Yet, while our eye strains to measure its dimensions, and our ear shrinks at the threatening of its voice, let us survey it with the searching eye of the prophet, and we shall see that its feet are of 'base and perishable clay.' Amidst all the terrors of its brightness, it has no foundation in the moral stability of justice. It is irradiated by no beam from Heaven; it is blessed by no prayer of man; it is worshipped with no gratitude by the patriot heart. It may remain for the time

that is appointed it; but the awful hour is on the wing when the universe will resound with its fall: and the same sun which now measures out with reluctance the length of its impious reign, will one day pour his undecaying beams amid its ruins, and bring forth from the earth which it has overshadowed the promises of a greater spring."*—That ultimate triumph of virtue over oppression, which the foresight of the statesman could not venture to anticipate, and the courage of the soldier hardly dared to expect, was clearly foreseen, and confidently announced, at the darkest period of the struggle, by the undoubting voice of religious faith. The philosopher may admire the moral grandeur of the sentiments conveyed in these eloquent words; the historian may mark the exact accomplishment which the prediction they contained was so soon to receive, and its singular felicity at the moment it was uttered: but the author trusts he will be forgiven if he feels a yet deeper interest in the voice of a revered parent—now issuing from the tomb—and gives vent to an expression of thankfulness, that he has been permitted to follow out, in the narrative of this mighty convulsion, those principles on the moral government of the world which were invariably maintained and publicly expressed by his father, during the whole of its continuance.

The subsequent chapters of this history contain nothing but the accomplishment of this prediction. The universe did indeed resound with the fall of the awful form which had overshadowed it; and the English historian may well feel a pride at the part which his country took in this immortal

* Fast Sermon, February 28, 1811, and Feb. 1806, by the Rev. Archibald Alison, Prebendary of Sarum, &c. *Sermons*, Vol. I., 272 and 408; 5th edition.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

deliverance. The British army was the vanguard which broke the spell which had so long entranced mankind: it was from the rocks of Torres Vedras that the French arms first permanently receded: it was on the plains of Castile that the first mortal strokes to their empire were delivered. Before the Niemen had been crossed, the rivulet of the Albuera had run red with Gallic blood; before Smolensko had fallen, Badajoz had yielded to the resistless assault of the English soldiery: it was in the triumphs of Salamanca that the Russians sought the long-wished-for omen of ultimate victory; in the recovery of Madrid that they beheld, amidst the flames of Moscow, the presage of their own deliverance.* The first to open the career of freedom to the world, England was also the last to recede from the conflict: the same standards which had waved over its earliest triumphs, were seen above the reserve on whom the final throes of the struggle depended. Vain would have been the snows of Russia and the conquest of Leipsic, vain the passage of the Rhine and the capture of Paris, if British valour had not for ever stopped the renewed career of victory on the field of Waterloo.† And mark the extraordinary coincidence between the termination of revolutionary triumph and the commencement of righteous retribution: both occurred at the same moment; it would seem as if a distinct line had been drawn by

Commencement at this period of the fall of the French empire.

* The news of the battle of Salamanca was received by both the French and Russian armies the evening before the battle of Borodino; that of the taking of Madrid by Lord Wellington as Kutusoff was performing his circular march round Moscow, by the light of the burning capital.—*Vide infra*, chap. lxix.

† "If the English army," said Napoleon, "had been defeated at Waterloo, what would have availed all the Russians, Austrians, or Prussians who were crowding to the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees?"—NAPOLEON, *Memoirs*, ix. book 203.

Omnipotence, beyond which victory should not fan the banners of guilt on the one side, nor disaster sink the spirit of virtue on the other. CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

"Fond impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
Raised by thy breath, hath quench'd the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray."

On the 8th January 1812, the long series of revolutionary triumphs terminated with the fall of Valencia; and the NEXT DAY Wellington led his army across the Agueda, and commenced the career of victory which never paused till the oppressor was hurled from his throne, and the British standards waved in triumph on the walls of Paris.*

Wellington prepares to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo. Jan. 1812.

Wellington no sooner perceived, from the dispersion of the armies of Portugal and the north, in wide cantonments on the upper Tagus and the Douro, in December 1811, that Ciudad Rodrigo was abandoned to its own resources, than he judged that the favourable opportunity, so long watched for, of attacking that fortress with some chance of success, had arrived. His army, indeed, was still unhealthy; nearly twenty thousand were yet in hospital; for though large reinforcements had arrived from England, yet the new regiments, in great part affected by the Walcheren fever, were far more liable to sickness than the old soldiers; the pay was three months in arrear; supplies were still got up with difficulty; and the new clothing for the troops had not yet arrived. But in all these respects he was well aware the enemy's armies were in a still worse condition; while the new positions assigned to, and now taken

* This is strictly true; every subsequent march in advance in Russia was a step towards ruin.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

by them, in conformity with the orders of the French Emperor, issued in November, had removed them to such a distance as rendered it doubtful whether, especially at that inclement season, any adequate force could be assembled for its relief. Bonnet was in the Asturias; Monbrun at Alicante; and the bulk of the army of the north, now charged with the defence of Ciudad Rodrigo, in cantonments on the Douro. The better, however, to conceal his real designs, Wellington, in the close of 1811, caused Hill to assume the offensive in Estremadura; and this was done with such success by that enterprising officer, whose slightest movements were watched with the utmost anxiety since the blow of Aroyos Molinos, that they abandoned Merida and Almendralijo, and concentrated their forces towards Llerena, while the English advanced posts occupied the latter town on the 2d of January, and spread themselves out in the neighbourhood of Badajoz. Such was the impression produced by this irruption into the French quarters, that Soult, conceiving Badajoz to be threatened, gave orders for assembling his forces through the whole of Andalusia, at the very moment that Wellington, having concealed his designs till the instant of their execution, was making his troops prepare fascines and gabions in their respective villages, and laying down the portable bridge over the Agueda for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.[1]

Dec. 29, 1811.

1 Vict. et Conq. xx. 281, 282. Jones, ii. 60, 61. Belm. i. 215. Nap. iv. 369, 371.

All things being in readiness, the bridge was fixed on the 6th, but a heavy fall of snow prevented the troops from moving till the 8th; as if to make the termination of Napoleon's long career of conquest, by the surrender of Valencia, coincide exactly with the commencement of his fall, by the English attack on CIUDAD RODRIGO. The light division only crossed

Commencement of the siege. Jan. 9.

on that day, and immediately formed the investment of the fortress; in the evening an advanced redoubt, situated on the great Teson, was carried by assault: the first parallel was established on the day following; and a few days after, the convent of Santa Cruz was stormed. The garrison, alarmed at the progress of the besiegers, now made a vigorous sortie, and did considerable mischief to the head of the sap before they were repulsed; but the progress of the works was not seriously interrupted by this effort. On the same afternoon the batteries opened; and at night the fortified convent of San Francesco, which flanked the right of the trenches, was carried by a gallant escalade of the 46th regiment. At half-past four in the evening, just as darkness set in, the breaching batteries opened, and thirty heavy guns sent forth their crashing fire against the walls. "Then was beheld a spectacle at once fearful and sublime. The enemy replied to the assailants' fire with more than fifty pieces: the bellowing of eighty large guns shook the ground far and wide; the smoke rested in heavy volumes upon the battlements of the place, or curled in light wreaths about the numerous spires; the shells, hissing through the air, seemed fiery serpents leaping from the darkness; the walls crashed to the stroke of the bullet, and the distant mountains returning the sound, appeared to moan over the falling city."[1]*

Jan. 13.

Jan. 14.

[1] Nap. iv. 375, 381. Jones, ii. 60, 62. Gurw. viii. 525, 527. Belm. iv. 265, 271.

On the three following days the fire continued with great vigour on both sides; the wall came down in huge masses, and though the besiegers were

Rapid progress of the siege.

* NAPIER. Colonel Napier's descriptions of battles and sieges are, in some places, the finest passages that exist in that style, in modern literature. Lord Londonderry's description of the same event is also uncommonly graphic and impressive.—LONDONDERRY, ii. 25.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

exposed to a most destructive cannonade, and the head of the trenches wellnigh stifled by the storm of grape and shells, eleven thousand of which were discharged by the enemy, yet the progress of the ruin was very evident; and by reserving all their fire for the ramparts, and not discharging a shot at the defences, the faussebraye was beaten down, and two large breaches were declared practicable in the rampart on the morning of the 19th. The nearest batteries were still above two hundred yards distant, and not one of the parapets was injured, circumstances which augmented greatly the difficulties of carrying the place by storm; but Wellington was, for many reasons, eager for the assault, for the prize to be gained by its capture was immense, and every day added to the danger of the fortress being relieved from without. The whole siege equipage and stores of the army of Portugal were deposited in the place, and the French had no other nearer than Madrid; its capture would render any attack on Almeida or the lines of Torres Vedras impossible for a very long period; the enemy's credit would suffer by the capture of so important a stronghold under the eye of two armies, each as strong as that of the besiegers, and the British would acquire by its reduction both a frontier fortress of approved strength, and a basis for future offensive operations of inestimable importance. Marmont, too, was collecting his troops and approaching; it was known that by the 28th or 29th he would be at Salamanca, only four marches distant, with forty thousand men, and the recent failure at Badajoz told but too clearly what might be the result of prosecuting the siege according to the established rules, and waiting till the counterscarp was blown in, and the parapets commanding the breach all levelled by the

besiegers' fire. The place was accordingly summoned on the 18th, and the governor having returned a gallant answer, that he would not surrender, preparations were made for the assault.[1] CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

[1] Gurw. viii. 526, 527. Nap. iv. 379, 383. Jones, ii. 61, 62. Belm. iv. 271, 277.

The perilous honour of this attack fell on the light and 3d divisions, whose turn it was to be that day on duty in the trenches. The latter, commanded by General M'Kinnon, preceded by the light companies, under Major Manners, was to attack the main breach; the Portuguese of the division were in reserve in the trenches, ready to advance if occasion required. The latter, under General Vandeleur and Colonel Barnard, received orders to assault the lesser breach, and, as soon as they got footing on the summit, turn sharp to the right in order to take in flank the defenders of the main breach, and assail in rear the interior retrenchments by which the enemy hoped to stop the progress of the assailants, even if they did win the rampart. This done, and a communication between the two columns being effected, an effort was to be made to burst open the Salamanca gate, and let in the rest of the division. Pack, with his brigade of Portuguese, as soon as the firing became general, was to make a false attack by escalade on the outwork of St Jago, on the opposite side of the town, which might be converted into a real attack if a favourable opportunity of penetrating should occur. The storming parties received orders not to fire a shot, but push on with the bayonet; the bearers of the bags, ladders, and other engines of assault, were not even armed, lest any irregular skirmish should interfere with their smoothing the way for the other troops. The preparations of the besieged, however, were very formidable: bombs and hand-grenades lined the top of the breaches to roll down on the assailants;

Plan of the assault.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

bags of powder were disposed among the ruins, to explode when they began to ascend the slopes; two heavy guns, charged with grape, flanked the summit of the larger breach; and a mine was prepared under it, to explode if all other defences failed. These obstacles, however, noways daunted the British troops; and the last words of Wellington's instructions breathed the spirit of the whole army as well as himself—"Ciudad Rodrigo must be carried by assault this evening at seven o'clock."[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 20, 1812. Gurw. viii. 527. Lond. ii. 259, 264. Nap. iv. 382, 384. Belm. iv. 274, 276.

Aspect of both sides before the assault.

The evening was calm and tranquil: the moon, in her first quarter, diffused a doubtful light over the scene, which, without disclosing particular objects, rendered their rude outline distinctly visible. The projecting bastions stood forth like giants in the gloom, darkly yet clearly defined on the adjoining shadows; while in their sides, yawning gulfs, half filled up with ruins, showed where the breaches had been made and the deadly strife was to ensue. In the British lines the trenches were crowded with armed men, among whom not a whisper was to be heard, nor a movement perceived; so completely had discipline, and the absorbing anxiety of the moment, subdued every unruly feeling and stilled every dauntless heart. As the great clock, however, of the Cathedral tolled seven, the word was quietly passed along that all was ready; and, leaping at once out of the trenches, the men rushed forward to the breaches, led by their respective forlorn hopes: that of the third division headed by Ensign Mackie, with the forlorn hope, and General M'Kinnon leading the storming party; that of the light by Mr Gurwood,* followed by Major Napier at the head of the storming party;—and with

* Now Lieutenant-Colonel Gurwood, the worthy companion in arms of Wellington, and who has conducted the publication of his *Despatches*.

the exploits of these brave men began THE FALL OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE.[1] CHAP. LXIII.

M'Kinnon's division crossed the open space between the trenches and the rampart, under a tempest of grape and musketry from the walls, and in a few minutes reached the counterscarp, which was found to be eleven feet deep. The sappers, however, instantly threw down their bags of hay, which soon diminished the depth by one-half, and the men, hastily leaping down, arrived at the foot of the great breach; but there a most serious opposition awaited them. The shells, rolled down from the top, burst amidst the throng with frightful explosions. Every shot of the close ranks of the French infantry told with effect on the dense mass below; and when, forcing their way up the slope, the British soldiers at length reached the summit, they were torn in pieces by a terrific discharge of grape from the heavy guns within a few yards' distance on either side, which at once, like a scythe, swept the whole warlike multitude down. Before these could be reloaded, however, those immediately behind pushed up, and won the ascent of the faussebraye, and at its top met two battalions which had mounted the perpendicular of the faussebraye by escalade, and together they crowded up the breach of the rampart, which was speedily carried. But just as, in the tumult of victory, they were striving to penetrate the interior retrenchments which the besieged had constructed to bar their further entrance, the mine which had been worked under their feet was suddenly exploded, and the bravest and most forward, among whom was the gallant M'Kinnon, were blown into the air. Still the column which had won the great breach held the ground they had gained, and, 1812.

The third division carry the great breach.

[1] Lond. ii. 263, 264. Nap. iv. 382, 384. Belm. iv. 177, 178. Gurw. viii. 527, 528.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

finding it impossible to penetrate further into the town, from the obstacle of the inner retrenchment, they established themselves among the ruins to await the result of the other attacks, and the scarlet uniforms came pouring in on every side.[1]

[1] Lond. ii. 264, 265. Nap. iv. 383, 385. Gurw. viii. 527, 528. Belm. iv. 277, 278.

Storm of the lesser breach.

In the meanwhile the light division under Craufurd, and the Portuguese under Pack, were still more successful. The former had three hundred yards of glacis to cross before they reached its crest; but this distance was swiftly passed, though the gallant Craufurd received a fatal wound during the rush; the counterscarp, eleven feet deep, was leaped down in the face of a dreadful fire of grape and musketry; and the lesser breach reached. It proved, however, to be extremely steep and narrow; and when two-thirds of the ascent had been won, the struggle was so violent that the men paused, and every musket in the crowd was snapped under the instinct of self-defence, though not one was loaded. Major Napier, however, who was at this moment struck down by a grape-shot, called to the troops to trust to their bayonets. The officers all at once sprung to the front, and the summit was won. Then arose a loud shout from every quarter; for Pack's Portuguese at the same moment had escaladed the walls on the opposite side. The light division now pushed on in great numbers, and, not forgetting their orders, turned sharp to the right, and with loud cheers assaulted in flank the intrenchment at the great breach, where the third division had been arrested; and by a mighty effort of both united, the barriers were burst through, and the troops rushed in. Some irregular fighting occurred in the streets, but no further systematic resistance was attempted; and Mr Gurwood, who, though wounded, had maintained his post at the head of the third division

when they carried the breach, received the governor's sword, the deserved reward of his heroism, at the gate of the castle.[1]

A frightful scene of plunder, intoxication, and violence, immediately ensued. The firing, which ceased for a moment when the tumult at the breaches subsided, was now renewed in the irregular way which denoted the commencement of riot and disorder; and shouts and screams on all sides fearfully intermingled with the groans of the wounded. The churches were ransacked, the wine and spirit cellars pillaged, and brutal intoxication spread in every direction. Soon the flames were seen bursting forth in several quarters; some houses were burned to the ground, others already ignited; and it was only by the intrepidity of a few officers and soldiers, whose coolness deserves the highest praise, that a fire, wantonly lighted in the midst of the great powder magazine, was extinguished. By degrees, however, the drunken men dropped down from excess of liquor, or fell asleep; the efforts of the officers and fresh divisions which Wellington instantly ordered into the town, were incessant to restore order: the houses on fire, and not consumed, were happily saved; and before morning a degree of order was restored which could hardly have been hoped for by those who witnessed the first license consequent upon victory. Yet even in these moments of unbridled passion, when the national vice of drunkenness appeared in its most frightful colours, some redeeming qualities were displayed: though all who combated were put to death without mercy, yet the unresisting every where received quarter; no slaughter, either of the citizens or enemy took place; and of a garrison consisting only of eighteen hundred

[1] Baird's Report, Aug. 8, 1812. Belm. iv. 291. Lond. ii. 264, 265. Nap. iv. 383, 384. Gurw. viii. 527, 528. Belm. iv. 278, 279.

Hideous disorders consequent on the storm.

CHAP. LXIII.

men at the commencement of the siege, full fifteen hundred, still unwounded, were made prisoners.[1]

1812.

The storming of Ciudad Rodrigo was one of the most brilliant exploits of the British army, and from none have greater or more splendid results immediately flowed. A hundred and fifty guns, including the whole battering train of Marmont's army, and immense stores of every kind, fell into the hands of the Allies, who had to lament the loss of thirteen hundred men, including two heroes cut off early in their career, Generals Craufurd and M'Kinnon. But it was not the material results, great and important as they were, which constituted its principal value. The moral influence with which it was attended was far more important. Wellington had now carried the frontier fortress of Spain, in the face of sixty thousand men hastening from the army of Portugal and the north to raise the siege. In the depth of winter he had thrown a portable bridge over the Agueda, and collected his troops and battering train with such secrecy and celerity, that the breaching batteries had opened their fire before the enemy had advices of the commencement of the enterprise, and the place was carried before they had begun to march for its relief. It was now evident that he had, for the first time since the Peninsular war commenced, obtained the ascendency over his enemies; and that, with the initiative in operation, the war was to be carried into the territory occupied by the enemy. Nor was the proof afforded of the increased proficiency of the English in the art of war, and their improved skill in the multifarious duties connected with its successful prosecution, less gratifying or less prophetic of a revolution in

[1] Nap. iv. 386. Lond. ii. 256, 267. Belm. iv. 279.

Vast importance of this capture.

the contest. Ciudad Rodrigo had been taken by storm, after a siege of twelve days, in the depth of winter, by an army of forty thousand men; whereas Massena, with one of eighty thousand, had been detained before its walls six weeks in the height of summer. The intelligence of this unlooked-for success, therefore, excited the most enthusiastic joy in all the allied capitals. The democrats of Cadiz were, for the time, overpowered; and the English general was created Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo amidst the unanimous acclamations of the Cortes and people. The Portuguese Government forgot its jealousy of English interference, and conferred upon him the title of Marquis of Torres Vedras; while the thanks of the British Parliament were voted to the army; and a pension of £2000 a-year settled on the earldom of Wellington.[1]

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Nap. iv. 386, 390. Jones, ii. 64, 67. Gurw. viii. 542.

Great was the consternation produced in the French generals by the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo. Marmont had arrived with the divisions under his immediate orders at Valladolid, to take the command of the newly organized army of Portugal on the 13th of January, without any suspicions of what was going forward; and it was not till late in the evening of that day that he learned that the British had crossed the Agueda. Instantly orders were dispatched to the troops in all directions to assemble. Bonnet was to hasten from the Asturian mountains; Brennier from the valley of the Tagus; Dorsenne to call in all the detached parties which were on the banks of the Douro; and these troops were all to rendezvous at Salamanca on the 1st February. Meanwhile, however, not only was Ciudad Rodrigo taken, but the breaches in the walls repaired, provisions for six weeks thrown in; and the British general, leaving a

Agitation it produced among the French generals.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

division to secure the place, had resumed his ancient positions at Fuente Guinaldo. It is impossible now to doubt that this rapid and brilliant success was mainly owing to the ill-judged dispositions of the French Emperor, who had detached Monbrun to Valencia, dislocated his armies, and given almost all their divisions a new direction, at the very time when the decisive operation was undertaken, joined to the oppressive way in which he had always carried on war, which had so desolated the country as to render the dispersion of the troops to a prodigious distance indispensable to their subsistence; but it was never his custom to take blame to himself, where he could, by possibility, throw it upon others; and his ill-humour, at this disaster, exhaled in violent invectives against both Marmont and Dorsenne, though it was his own directions which had left to neither the means of averting it.[1]*

! Belm. iv. 216, 217. Berthier to Marmont. Feb. 11, 1812. Berthier to Marmont. Feb. 18, 1812. Belm. i. App. No. 88, 91.

Secret preparations made against Badajoz.

No sooner had Wellington put Ciudad Rodrigo in a situation of defence against any sudden attack, than he turned his eyes towards BADAJOZ, the remaining frontier fortress, which it was necessary that he should reduce before attempting his meditated invasion of the interior of Spain. As this enterprise re-

* "The Emperor is highly displeased at the negligence which you have evinced in the affair of Ciudad Rodrigo. Why had you not advices from it twice a-week? What were you doing with the five divisions of Souham? This is a strange mode of carrying on war; and the Emperor makes no secret of his opinion, that the disgrace of this disaster attaches to you. It would have fallen on General Thiebault, if that general had not been able to show that he had not sufficient force to do any thing: whereas the whole division Souham was at your disposal. This humiliating check cannot be ascribed but to the defect of your dispositions and the want of consideration in the measures you have adopted."—BERTHIER *to* DORSENNE, 11*th Feb.* 1812. BELMAS, I., *App.* No. 88.

"The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo is an affront to you: and the English are sufficiently acquainted with French honour to know, that that affront

quired the united strength of the whole army, Ciudad Rodrigo, after having been repaired and provisioned for six weeks, was delivered over to Don Julian Sanchez, with his division of guerillas; and the Spanish Government was warned, in the strongest manner, of the necessity of taking immediate steps to have the breaches thoroughly repaired, and provisions for at least six months thrown in. Meanwhile preparations were made for the siege with all imaginable activity; but as the French marshals were now thoroughly alarmed by the blow struck at Ciudad Rodrigo, and Soult, in particular, was sensitively alive to any demonstrations against Badajoz, they required to be conducted with all imaginable secrecy. The battering train and engineers were accordingly embarked for Lisbon as if for Oporto; and at sea re-shipped on board small craft, privately sent out from different parts of the coast, to elude attention, and sent up the river Caldao, in the Alentejo, to Alsacer da Sal, where the country carriages could, without suspicion, convey them to the banks of the Guadiana; while fascines and gabions were secretly prepared at Elvas, amidst other repairs of its ramparts, ostensibly directed to the defence of that fortress. Arrangements were at the same time made for transferring the grand supply of the army from the artery of the Douro to that of the Tagus: a temporary depot was formed at Celorico, as if for

may become the source of a burden to them, by forcing them to preserve the prize they have won. The Emperor is far from being satisfied with your dispositions. You have the superiority over the enemy; and instead of taking the initiative, you are always on the defensive. You fatigue and harass your troops without doing any thing: that is not the way to carry on war. Never mind Hill and the army of the south: that army is strong enough to combat five divisions of the English army. You should have marched on Ciudad Rodrigo, and retaken it before the breaches were filled up or the place provisioned."—BERTHIER *to* MARMONT, 18*th Feb.* 1812. *Ibid. App.* No. 91.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

the nourishing of preparations on the Beira frontier; and a grand magazine established beyond the Douro. So completely did these preparations impose upon the French Emperor, that he entirely mistook the real point of attack; and in spite of the most urgent remonstrances of Marmont, who insisted that Badajoz was threatened, Napoleon wrote to him, "that the English general was not mad; and that an invasion on the side of Salamanca was alone to be guarded against."[1]*

[1] Jones, ii. 67, 68. Nap. iv. 392, 393. Belm. iv. 217, 218.

Movement of the army to that fortress.

Having thus completely outwitted the vigilance of the French Emperor, and at length completed his well-concealed preparations for the important enterprise in view, Wellington, on the 9th of March, suddenly commenced his march to the south; and the troops, from all quarters, converged towards Badajoz. One division of infantry alone remained on the Agueda, to succour Ciudad Rodrigo if necessary, and retard any incursion which the enemy might attempt on the Beira frontier, which was put in as good a position of defence as circumstances would admit. The English general arrived at Elvas on the

March 11.

11th, and immediately prepared to invest the place; but incredible difficulties, which wellnigh proved

* "You must suppose the English mad to imagine that they will march upon Badajoz, leaving you at Salamanca; that is, leaving you in a situation to get to Lisbon before them. Even if, yielding to imprudent counsels, they should move towards the south, you may at once arrest their movements by detaching one or two divisions towards the Tagus: by that you will cause yourself to be respected, and regain the initiative over the enemy. I repeat it, then: the instructions of the Emperor are precise: you are not to quit Salamanca: you are even to re-occupy the Asturias: let your headquarters be at Salamanca; and never cease to menace the English from thence."—BERTHIER *to* MARMONT, *11th February* 1812.—These instructions were repeated in still stronger terms, in spite of Marmont's representations to the contrary, in another despatch of Berthier to him of 18th February 1811.—*See* BELMAS, i. No. 90, 91, *Appendix*.

fatal to the whole enterprise, retarded, for a very considerable period, the commencement of the siege. No representations which either Wellington, or his able coadjutor Mr Stuart, the English ambassador at Lisbon, could make, could induce the Portuguese Regency to put in hazard their popularity, by making the magistrates draw forth the resources of the country for the conveyance of the ordnance and siege equipage, either from Almeida, where some of it came, or from the river Caldao, where the remainder had been brought by water-carriage. Hence, though the troops crossed the Tagus on a bridge of boats at Vallabalho on the 9th and 10th, it was not till the 15th that the pontoons could be thrown over the Guadiana, nor till the 17th that the investment of the fortress could be completed. The delay of these days afterwards required to be redeemed by torrents of British blood.[1]*

March 15.

March 17.

[1] Nap. iv. 397, 398. Jones, ii. 68, 69. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 24, 25.

To cover the siege, Hill was posted near Almendralejos with thirty thousand men, of whom five thousand were horse; while Wellington himself, with twenty-two thousand, commanded the besieging force. It was at first expected that Marmont would immediately co-operate with Soult in endeavouring to disturb the operations of the English army; but it was soon ascertained that his divisions had all marched through the Puerto de Pico, from the valley of the Tagus, into Castile, in obedience, as it is now known, to the absurd and positive orders of Napoleon; and consequently the British covering army was relieved

Commencement of the preparations for the siege.

* The rich city of Evora, which had suffered so dreadfully from Loison's massacre, in August 1808, (*ante* vi. 745,) and from the effects of British aid, and had never seen the fire of an enemy's bivouac since that time, refused to furnish a single cart.—NAPIER, iv. 397; *and* WELLINGTON *to* STUART, *9th April* 1812.—GURWOOD, ix. 52. WELLINGTON *to* LORD LIVERPOOL, *27th March* 1812.—GURWOOD, ix. 19.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

of all anxiety except that arising from Soult, who was approaching from Andalusia. Meanwhile, the operations of the siege were vigorously conducted; but it was soon apparent that a most desperate as well as skilful defence might be anticipated. Philippon, whose great talents in this species of warfare had been experienced in the former siege, had been indefatigable during the six months that had since elapsed, in improving the fortifications, and adding to the strength and resources of the place. He had five thousand men under his command, drawn by equal numbers from the armies of Marmont, Soult, and Jourdan at Madrid, in order to interest all these commanders in its defence: the old breaches were all repaired, and strong additional works constructed to retard the operations of the besiegers in the quarters from whence the former attacks had been made. The ditches had been cleared out, and in some places materially deepened, as well as filled with water; the glacis was every where elevated, so as to cover the scarp of the rampart; the *tête-du-pont* on the other side of the river, ruined in the former siege, had been thoroughly repaired, and ample provisions laid up for the numerous garrison. The castle, in particular, which is situated on a rock more than a hundred feet above the level of the Guadiana, and surrounded by walls twenty-eight feet in height, was deemed perfectly secure; and what between dread of the approaching siege, and the orders of the French governor, all the inhabitants, except four or five thousand of the most indigent class, had left the place, so that no failure of provisions was to be apprehended.[1]

[1] Belm. iv. 311, 319. Jones, ii. 68, 6. Nap. iv. 397, 401.

These defensive preparations had rendered a renewal of the attack on Fort Christoval impossible;

and therefore Wellington resolved to commence his operations against an outwork called Fort Picurina, with a view to the final attack on the rampart at the bastion of Trinidad, which could be breached from the hill on which it stood. Ground was broken against this outwork, unperceived by the enemy, in the night, and parallels established within two hundred yards of its walls. Alarmed at the progress of this approach, Philippon, two days after, ordered a sortie with fifteen hundred men, including some squadrons of cavalry, by the gates of La Trinidad. These gallant men, whose approach was covered by a thick fog, at first did great mischief in the British trenches, driving the whole working parties from their posts, sweeping away several hundred intrenching tools, and spreading confusion as far even as the bivouacs and depots in the rear; but Picton's whole division immediately ran to arms, and the enemy were ultimately driven back with the loss of above three hundred men; though the British purchased their final advantage by the loss of a hundred and fifty men, including Colonel Fletcher, the able chief of the engineers. To guard against similar checks in future, Wellington removed his reserve parks nearly half-a-mile farther back, and established a reserve guard of six field-pieces near the trenches, with a signal post on a neighbouring height to give timely warning of the enemy's approach. No further attempt was made by the besieged to disturb the approaches of the British; but they had for some days a powerful ally in the rain, which descended in such floods that the trenches were filled with water, and the earth was so saturated that it was impossible to cut it into any regular form. At length on the 24th, after a deluge of four days, the atmosphere cleared

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Commencement of the siege. March 17.

March 19.

March 24.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

up; and the investment was completed on the right bank of the Guadiana, while a heavy fire was opened from eight-and-twenty guns on the Picurina, which

March 25.

soon beat down the outer palisades, the British marksmen keeping up such a fire from the trenches that no man ventured to look over the parapet. The defences were injured, though not breached; but as they did not exhibit the appearance of great external strength, and time was of essential value, from the known energy of Soult, who was collecting his forces to raise the siege, it was determined, without further delay, to endeavour to carry it by assault.[1]

[1] Belm. iv. 319, 329. Nap. iv. 406, 408. Jones, ii. 70, 71. Gurw. ix. 6, 17.

Storming of Fort Picurina.

The attack was made by General Kempt with five hundred of the third division. The night was fine, and the arrangements skilfully and correctly made: but when the troops, by a sudden rush, reached the palisades, they found them so far repaired as to render entrance impossible; while a streaming fire from the top of the walls cut down all who paused at that post of danger. The crisis soon became imminent, and the carnage terrible, for the enemy's marksmen shot fast from the rampart; the alarm bells in the town rang violently, and the guns of the castle opened in rear on the struggling mass of the assailants. Amidst this fearful tumult the cool courage of Kempt skilfully directed the attack; the troops were drawn round to the part of the fort sheltered from the fire; the reserves were quickly brought up, and sent headlong in to support the front. The shock was irresistible; in an instant the scaling ladders were applied, and the assailants with loud cheers mounted the rampart; while at the same time the axe-men of the light division discovered the gate, and, hewing down the barriers, also burst in on the side next the place. So sudden was the onset, so

vehement the fight, that the garrison, in the confusion, forgot, or had not time to roll over the shells and combustibles arranged on the ramparts. The British lost above three hundred and fifty men in this heroic assault, which lasted an hour: but it contributed essentially to the progress of the siege; for Philippon had calculated upon retarding the besiegers four or five days longer by this outwork, and if the assault had not taken place on that day, this would actually have happened, as the loopholed gallery in the counterscarp and the mines would by that time have been completed.[1]

[1] Belm. iv. 329, 331. Nap. iv. 409, 410. Jones, ii. 70, 71. Gurw. ix. 18, 19.

No sooner did Philippon learn the capture of the fort, than he opened a tremendous fire upon it from every gun on the bastions which could be brought to bear, and with such effect that the lodgement effected in it was destroyed, as the troops could not remain in the work; and a sally to retake it with three battalions was attempted, but was quickly repulsed. On the following night, however, the men were got under cover, and the second parallel being completed in advance of the fort, enfilading and breaching batteries were erected in it: and after five days' continued firing, the sap being pushed up close to the walls, the Trinidad bastion crumbled under the repeated strokes of the bullet, and soon three large yawning chasms appeared in its walls. By the morning of the 6th they were all declared practicable; and though the counterscarp was still entire, and the most formidable preparations were evidently making to retrench the summits of the ruined parts of the rampart, yet, as Soult was now approaching from Andalusia, and Marmont had concentrated his whole force at Salamanca, from whence he was expected to menace Ciudad Rodrigo, into which the

March 26.

CHAP. LXIII.

1813.

Spaniards had never yet, notwithstanding the urgent representations of Wellington, thrown any provisions, he determined to hazard an assault on the following day.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool. March 27, 1812: Gurw. ix. 16, 20. Nap. iv. 412, 415. Belm. iv. 333, 349. Jones, ii. 71, and Gurw. ix. 31.

Plan of attack of the fortress itself.

The plan of attack was suited to the magnitude of the enterprise, the extent of the preparations for repelling it which had been made by the garrison, and the known courage and ability both of the governor and his followers. On the right, Picton's division was to file out of the trenches, to cross the Rivillas rivulet, and endeavour to scale the castle walls, notwithstanding their rocky elevation and imposing height, when the tumult at the breaches had drawn the principal attention of the enemy to the other side of the fortress. On the left, Leith's division was to make a feint on the near Pardaleras outwork, and a real attack, by escalade, on the more distant San Vincente bastion, though the glacis was there mined, the ditch deep, the scarp twenty-eight feet high, and the ramparts lined with bold and determined men. In the centre, the fourth and light divisions, under General Colville and Colonel Barnard, were to assault the breaches. Like the other columns of assault, they were furnished with ladders and axes, and preceded by storming parties of five hundred men, led by their respective forlorn hopes. The light division was to assault the bastion of Santa Maria, the fourth division that of Trinidad; and the two together were nearly ten thousand strong. But they had need of all their strength: for the enemy was at once numerous and skilful, elated by former success, and confident of future victory; the ramparts were lofty, the breaches steep and narrow, and Philippon's skill had prepared the most direful means of destruction for the dark and

massy columns that stood in the British lines, with hearts beating for the assault.[1]

1812.

Sixteen chosen companies were charged with the defence of the three breaches, and were arrayed behind the parapets which had been constructed on the *terrepleine* of the ramparts; immediately behind them was placed a strong battalion, in a retrenchment which had been formed in the rear of the menaced bastion; a company of sharpshooters occupied a raft which was floated in the inundation which immediately adjoined the foot of the breaches and flanked the assaulting columns; and another battalion was in reserve at the gate of Trinidad, ready to carry succour to any point which might require it. Every soldier had four loaded muskets beside him, to avoid the delay of charging them at the critical moment; shells were arranged in abundance along the parapet, to roll down on the assailants the moment they filled the ditch; heavy logs were provided, to crush whole files by their descending weight; and at the summit of each breach an immense beam of wood, sunk three feet deep into the earth at either extremity, was placed, thickly studded with sword-blades, with the sharp end turned outwards, so as to defy entrance alike to strength and courage. Similar preparations, with the exception of the sword-blades, were made at the castle and the bastion of San Vincente, which were menaced by escalade; and pits dug, in considerable numbers, at the foot of the great breach, to entangle or suffocate the brave men who might have descended into the fosse. Relying on these preparations, and their own conscious resolution, the French soldiers confidently looked down from their lofty ramparts on the dark columns of the distant enemy, who were arrayed for the assault; and many a gallant

[1] Wellington's instructions. April 6, 1812. Gurw. ix. 36, 38. Nap. iv. 417, 419. Jones, ii. 71, 72. Belm. iv. 348, 349.

Philippon's preparations for defence.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

breast there throbbed, not less ardently than in the British host, for the decisive moment which was to determine this long-continued duel between the two nations.[1]

[1] Belm. iv. 349, 350. Nap. iv. 419, 421. Jones, ii. 75.

Unsuccessful assault of the great breaches.

It was intended that the whole points should be assailed at once, and ten o'clock was the hour assigned for this attack. But a bomb having burst close to the third division, destined for the assault of the castle, and discovered their position, Picton was obliged to hurry on the assault; and as the ramparts now streamed out fire in all directions, the fourth and light divisions could no longer be restrained, but silently and swiftly advanced towards the breaches; while the guard in the trenches, leaping out with a loud shout, enveloped and carried the little outwork of San Roque, by which the column attacking the castle might have been enfiladed in flank. They were discovered, however, as they reached the crest of the glacis, by the accidental explosion of a bomb, and its light showed the ramparts crowded with dark figures and glittering arms, which the next instant were shrouded in gloom. Still not a shot was fired on either side. Silently the hay packs were let down, the ladders placed to the counterscarp, and the forlorn hopes and storming parties descended into the fosse. Five hundred of the bravest were already down and approaching the breaches, when a stream of fire shot upward into the heavens, as if the earth had been rent asunder; instantly a crash, louder than the bursting of a volcano, was heard in the ditch, and the explosion of hundreds of shells and powder-barrels blew the men beneath to atoms. For a moment only the light division paused on the edge of the crater; then, with a shout which drowned even the roar of the artillery, they leaped down into the

fiery gulf, while at the same moment the fourth division came running up, and poured over with the like fury.[1]

[1] Nap. 420, 422. Jones, ii. 72. Belm. iv. 350, 351.

And now a scene ensued unparalleled even in the long and bloody annals of the revolutionary war. Boiling with intrepidity, the British columns came rushing on; and, the rear constantly urging on the front, pushed down, no one knew how, into the ditch. Numbers, from keeping too far to the right, fell into the part inundated, and were drowned; but the dead bodies filled up the ditch and formed a ghastly bridge, over which their comrades passed.* Others inclining to the left, came to the dry part, and shunned a watery grave; but they did so only to fall into the still more appalling terrors of fire. The space into which both divisions had now descended, was a ditch of very confined dimensions, with the enemy's rampart in front and both flanks; so that the troops, crowded together in a narrow space at the bottom, were exposed to a cross plunging fire on every side except their rear, where stood a ravine filled with British soldiers, whose loud cheers and incessant though ineffectual fire against the parapets, rather augmented than diminished the general confusion. The enemy's shouts, also, from the breaches and walls, were loud and terrible; and the bursting of the shells, the explosion of the powder barrels, the heavy crash of the descending logs, the continued stream of fire from the ramparts, the roaring of the guns from either flank, and distant thunder of the parallel batteries, which still threw howitzers on the breaches, formed a scene of matchless sublimity and horror. Still, even in this awful situation, the gallantry of

Terrific struggle at their foot.

* "Ce n'est que par le grand nombre qui sont noyés que le passage en est permis aux autres."—Belmas, iv. 351.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

the officers and the devotion of the men, prompted them to the most heroic efforts: the loud shouts of defiance by the enemy were answered by vehement cheers even from dying lips, and roused the English to maddened efforts; again and again bands of daring leaders, followed by the bravest of their followers, rushed up the breaches, and, despite every obstacle, reached the summits. Vain attempt! the ponderous beams, thick studded with sword-blades, barred any further progress; the numerous spikes set among the ruins transfixed their feet; discharges of grape and musketry, within pistol-shot on either flank, tore down their ranks; and even the desperation of the rear, who strove to force the front forward, in order to make a bridge of their writhing bodies, failed in shaking the steady girdle of steel. Some even strove to make their way under it, and, having forced their heads through, had their brains beat out by the but-ends of the enemy's muskets. Never since the invention of fire-arms had such a slaughter taken place in so narrow a space: for two hours the men continued in that living grave, disdaining to retreat, unable to advance; and it was not till two thousand had fallen in this scene of horror, that by Wellington's orders they retired to re-form for a second assault.[1]

1 Nap. iv. 424, 426. Belm. iv. 350, 351. Jones, ii. 72, 73. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, April 7, 1812. Gurw. ix. 41, 42. Life of Picton, ii. 106, 107. Philippon's Official Account. Belm. iv. 419.

While this tremendous conflict was going on at the breaches, a struggle of a different, but hardly less violent kind took place at the castle. There Picton's division were no sooner discovered by the explosion of the bomb among their ranks, than the whole moved forward at a steady pace, about half an hour before the fight began at the breaches. They crossed the stream of the Rivillas by single file, under a terrible fire from the ramparts; for the

The castle is assaulted by Picton.

enemy brought every gun and musket to bear on the advancing mass, and the light which spread on all sides showed each man as clear as day. Rapidly forming on the other side, they rushed quickly up the rugged steep to the foot of the castle wall. There Kempt, who had hitherto headed the assault, was struck down, and Picton was left alone to conduct the column. To the soul of a hero, however, he united the skill of a general; and well were both tried on that eventful night. Soon the palisades were burst through, and in ran Picton followed by his men; but when they got through and reached the foot of the wall, the fire, almost perpendicularly down, was so violent that the troops wavered: in an instant the loud voice of their chief was heard above the din, calling on them to advance; and they rushed in, bearing on their shoulders the ponderous scaling ladders, which were immediately raised up against the wall. Down in an instant, with a frightful crash, came huge logs of wood, heavy stones, shells, and hand-grenades; while the musketry, with deadly effect, was plied from above, and the bursting projectiles, illuminating the whole battlements, enabled the enemy to take aim with unerring accuracy. Several of the ladders were broken by the weight of the throng who pressed up them; and the men, falling from a great height, were transfixed on the bayonets of their comrades below, and died miserably. Still fresh assailants swarmed round the foot of the ladders: hundreds had died, but hundreds remained eager for the fray. Macpherson of the 45th, and Pakenham,* reached the top of the rampart; but were instantly and severely wounded, and thrown down. Picton, though

* Now Sir Edward Pakenham.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

wounded, called to his men that they had never been defeated, and that now was the time to conquer or die. "If we cannot win the castle," said he, "let us die upon the walls." Animated by his voice, they again rushed forward, but again all the bravest were struck down. Picton himself was badly wounded, and his men, despite all their valour, were obliged to recoil, and take shelter under a projection of the hill.[1]

[1] Picton's Memoirs, ii. 96, 103. Nap. iv. 420, 421. Subaltern, 172. Belm. iv. 350, 351.

It is at length carried.

The attack seemed hopeless, when the reviving voice of Picton again summoned the soldiers to the attack; and he directed it a little to the right of the former assault, where the wall was somewhat lower, and an embrasure promised some facility for entrance. There a young hero, Colonel Ridge of the 45th, who had already distinguished himself at Ciudad Rodrigo, sprung forward, and calling on the men to follow, himself mounted the first ladder. As quick as lightning he ascends the steps; his broadsword is in guard above his head; his trusty grenadier bayonets project from behind on either side—and he is on the summit! Canch, of the grenadiers, quickly mounts another ladder; and both stand side by side on the ramparts. The shouting troops press up after them, and the castle is won. Speedily the enemy were driven through the inner gate into the town; but a reinforcement arrived from the French reserve; a sharp firing took place at the gate, and Ridge fell in the glorious sepulchre which his sword had won. The enemy made but a slight resistance in the castle after the ramparts were gained, but the fighting was still severe in other quarters; and Philippon, deeming the escalade of the castle impossible, disbelieved the officer who brought the account of it, and delayed to send succours till the English had established themselves in their important conquest.[2]

[2] Picton's Memoirs, ii. 101, 103. Nap. 420, 421. Belm. iv. 354, 355. Philippon's Official Account. Belm. iv. 420, 421.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

While these furious combats were going on at the breaches and in the castle, Walker, with his brigade, was escalading the distant bastion of San Vincente, so that the town was literally girdled with fire. They got near to the counterscarp undiscovered, and immediately, by means of their ladders, began to descend into the ditch; but at that moment the moon shone out, they were discovered, and a heavy fire began from the walls. The Portuguese in the division immediately threw down their ladders and fled; but the British pushed on, and soon reached the foot of the rampart. It proved, however, to be thirty feet high; the ladders were too short; a mine was sprung beneath their feet; the fire from the walls was quick and deadly; and logs of wood and shells thrown over, crushed or tore in pieces whole companies at once. Fortunately, during the alarm occasioned by the carrying of the castle, the assailants discovered a part of the scarp only twenty feet high; and there three ladders were placed against an empty embrasure. The ladders, however, were still too short, and the first man who got up, had to stoop down and draw up his comrades, after being pushed up by them. Instantly the crowds came rushing on; and Walker himself, among the foremost, was struck down on the ramparts, severely but not mortally wounded. The troops immediately advanced, with a rapid step and loud cheers, towards the breaches, where the incessant roar and awful conflagration told that the struggle was still going on. Strenuously fighting, they took several bastions, when the false alarm of a mine being sprung created a panic, and they were drawn back almost to the original one they had won; but a battalion left there, by a crashing volley arrested the pursuers, and the

Walker's division also gets in by escalade.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

troops rallying again, fought on towards the breaches, while another body marched towards the great square of the town. There their bugles sounded an English air in the heart of Badajoz; they were answered by a similar note from the castle. Soon the breaches were abandoned, and the victors poured in from all quarters; while Philippon crossed the bridge and took refuge in Fort Christoval, where he surrendered at discretion next morning, but not till he had sent off messengers to Soult, to warn him of the disaster, and in time to avert a greater one from himself.[1] *

[1] Philippon's Official Account, Belm. iv. 419, 422. Nap. iv. 429, 430. Belm. iv. 357, 358. Jones, ii. 73, 74. Gurw. ix. 43, 47. Picton's Memoirs, ii. 113.

During the whole of this eventful night, Wellington remained in one position, near the quarries, anxiously listening to the awful roar, and receiving the accounts which the different aides-de-camp brought of the desperate resistance which the troops were encountering at the breaches. Albeit well aware of the dreadful loss which must be going forward, he calmly received the intelligence, knowing how much the fate of the war depended on perseverance at that decisive moment. At length an officer arrived from Picton's division, with intelligence that the castle was taken. "Who brings that intelligence?" said Wellington, in his usual quick, decided way. "Lieutenant Tyler," said the officer. "Ah, Tyler! well—are you certain, sir?" "I entered the castle with the troops, have just left it, and General Picton's in possession." "With how many men?" "His division."[2] "Return, sir, and desire General Picton to

Wellington's conduct during the assault.

[2] Picton's Memoirs, ii. 118, 119. United Service Journal. Nap. iv. 433.

* For the description of this memorable assault, I have collated the inimitable narrative of Colonel Napier with the official despatch of Wellington in Gurwood's Despatches, and the animated accounts of Colonel Jones, Sir Thomas Picton's Memoirs, and the United Service Journal; and added many important facts from Philippon's official despatch, given, with many other valuable documents regarding the siege, in BELMAS, *Journaux des Sieges dans la Peninsule*, iv. 369, 342.

maintain his position at all hazards." Enthusiastic joy immediately took possession of all present; but when Wellington, at a subsequent period of the night, learned the full extent of the havoc made in his brave men, his wonted firmness gave way, and he yielded to a passionate burst of grief.

Five thousand men and officers had fallen in all during the siege, including seven hundred Portuguese. Of these, eight hundred were killed, and no less than three thousand five hundred had been struck down during the assault—an unparalleled loss, proving alike the skill and intrepidity of the defence, and the desperate valour of the attack. But the prize was immense, and the consequences of the triumph decisive, in the end, of the fate of the Peninsula. A place of the first order, with the preservation of which the honour of three French armies had been wound up, in the best condition, garrisoned by five thousand choice troops, and commanded by an officer of equal courage and ability, had been captured after a siege of nineteen days, only eleven of which had been open trenches: less than half the time which Suchet, with superior means for the actual siege, had consumed in the reduction of Taragona.* One hundred and seventy heavy guns, five thousand muskets, and eighty thousand shot were found in the place; three thousand eight hundred men, including the Governor Philippon, were made prisoners; thirteen hundred had been killed or wounded since the commencement of the siege. But what was of far

Magnitude and importance of the conquest.

* Suchet broke ground before Taragona on the 21st May, and the place was finally carried by assault on the 28th June, a period of thirty-seven days. Suchet's force, which was all engaged in the siege, (the enemy's disturbing force in the rear being very trifling,) was 21,000, Wellington's at Badajoz, 19,000.—*Vide* SUCHET'S *Memoirs*, ii. 51, 109; and *Ante*, viii. pp. 221, 233.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

more importance than even the reduction of such a fortress in such a time and with such means, Wellington had now clearly obtained the superiority over the French generals; their two border strongholds, alike a barrier for defence and a base for offensive operations on their side, had been reduced; the path was smoothed for the English army into the heart of Spain, and the disunion already obvious between the Imperial marshals, might be reasonably expected to be increased rather than diminished by a disaster which would expose them both to the vials of the Emperor's wrath.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, April 7, 1812. Gurw. ix. 47, 49. Jones, ii. 74. Philippon's Official Account. Belm. iv. 420, 422.

It would be well for the English historian if he could stop here, and could recount that his countrymen, after having displayed such heroic bravery in the assault, had not stained their victory by the usual excesses which, by the barbarous usages still observed in war, are so often, in the case of a town carried by assault, wreaked on the heads of the unoffending citizens. But this, unfortunately, is not the case: disorders and excesses of every sort prevailed; and the British soldiery showed by their conduct after the storm, that they inherited their full share of the sins, as well as the virtues, of the children of Adam. The disgraceful national vice of intemperance, in particular, broke forth in its most frightful colours; all the wine-shops and vaults were broken open and plundered; pillage was universal; every house was ransacked for valuables, spirits, or wine; and crowds of drunken soldiers, for two days and nights, thronged the streets; while the breaking open of doors and windows, the report of casual muskets, and the screams of the despoiled citizens, resounded on all sides. At length, on the third day, Wellington being highly incensed at the continuance of the disorders,

Disgraceful pillage of the town.

marched two fresh divisions into the town; a gallows was erected in the great square, a few of the worst plunderers were executed, and thus order was restored. Yet even in this humiliating scene many redeeming traits were to be found; the worst characters indeed here, as on all occasions where popular passion obtains full vent, were the leaders; but hundreds risked, and many lost their lives, in endeavouring to put a stop to the violence. No blood was shed of the unresisting, and comparatively few of the more atrocious crimes usual on such occasions committed: while the French conquest of Taragona was disgraced by the slaughter, on their own admission, of four thousand chiefly unarmed citizens,* the British storm of Badajoz exhibited the glorious trophy of as many direful and bloodstained enemies rescued from death in the moment of hard-earned victory: the very horror which the British officers at the time felt and have since expressed at the brutal excesses of the men, only shows how abhorrent such usages were to the mild and humane spirit which prevailed in the English army.[n]

Compare Nap. iv. 431, Jones, ii. 76, and United Service Journal, *voce* Assault of Badajoz.

The Duke of Wellington said in Parliament, on occasion of the Chartist insurrection at Birmingham in July 1839, that he had seen many towns in his life taken by storm, but he had never seen a town treated as Birmingham was in that quarter where the rioters had gained the superiority. This observation is clearly well-founded in the sense in which it was obviously meant; viz. that no part of Badajoz, or any other town he had seen taken by assault, was treated

[n] "Cette nuit fût horrible; le sang des Espagnols inondait les rues de cette malheureuse cité, et tout y presentait le spectacle affreux mais inévitable d'une ville prise d'assaut. Les Espagnols perdoient quatre milles hommes, tant de la garnison que des habitans."—BELMAS, *Journaux des Sieges dans la Peninsule*, iii. 547.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

so horribly as that part of Birmingham was where the rioters got the mastery; for if the Chartists had had possession of that town for three days, as the troops had of Badajoz, they would have burned and destroyed the whole edifices it contained. In two hours three hundred Chartists in the Bull-ring burned three houses, gutted thirty, and consumed by fire the whole furniture which they had dragged out, before the eyes of the owners; while nothing but plunder and intoxication, with a few casual conflagrations, took place at Badajoz, even during the three days the disorders lasted;—a memorable example of the increasing moderation which the humanity of recent times had infused even into the most awful of all moments, that of a town taken by assault, and of the furious passions which democratic delusion had at the same time spread among the corrupted members of an opulent and pacific community.

Soult's advance from Andalusia, and retreat to it.

Soult, never dreaming of this powerful fortress being carried in so short a period that there hardly seemed to be time for the breaching batteries to have approached the body of the place, had set out from Seville, on the 31st March, with the whole force which he could collect, and debouched by Guadalcanal into the south of Estremadura on the 4th April. On the 7th he was advancing from Fuente del Maestro to Santa Martha, at no great distance from Badajoz, with twenty-five thousand men, prepared to give battle to Hill's covering force, which was just before him, when the horsemen detached by Philippon brought the intelligence of the fall of that fortress. He immediately retraced his steps with great celerity, and regained Seville by the 14th; for he was in no condition to fight the whole English army, and the Andalusian capital, which was menaced by Villemur and Morillo, who had issued

out of Portugal with four thousand men, and already approached to within ten miles of it, loudly called for his protection. In the course of the retreat, however, the British horse, two thousand strong, came up with them near Usagre, and a brilliant cavalry action took place, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, with an equal force of the enemy, who were broken and pursued four miles in great disorder, with the loss of a hundred and thirty prisoners, besides nearly as many killed and wounded.[1]

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. April 12.

[1] Belm. i. 219, 220. Nap. iv. 434, 435.

A great game now lay before the English general, and he was strongly tempted to play it. Soult, with a disposable army of twenty-five thousand only, was in Andalusia, and even by raising the siege of Cadiz, and exposing his troops to be assailed in rear by the powerful garrison of that city, he could only bring forty thousand into the field; and though they were among the very best troops in the French army, and commanded by one of their ablest generals, yet with forty-five thousand British and Portuguese, who were now gathered round his standards, Wellington might hope to strike a decisive blow against that important branch of the enemy's force. That he entertained this design is now proved by his despatches;[1] but he soon received intelligence from the north which compelled him to forego these prospects, how brilliant soever, and attend to the vital point of preserving his communications with his base of operations. Marmont having with infinite difficulty collected fifteen days' provisions for his troops, an indispensable preliminary to entering upon the wasted districts around Ciudad Rodrigo, had advanced from Salamanca in the beginning of April, and immediately advanced to that fortress, which he invested. Thence pushing on past Almeida, he entered Beira

Marmont's irruption into Beira.

[1] Gurw. ix. 42.

April 1.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

with above thirty-five thousand men, which he ravaged with the utmost cruelty; and Trant and Wilson, who had assembled the militia of the province, even with the aid of the troops which Wellington had left to guard the frontier, were unable to offer any effectual resistance, as Silviera had not yet come up with that of Entre Douro e Minho. Trant, however, was not discouraged, and that enterprising officer even formed the daring design of surprising the French marshal in his headquarters at Sabugal; and this was prevented by the singular coincidence of Marmont having on the same night formed a project of carrying off the English commander, which only failed from a single drummer having accidentally discovered the approach of his horsemen, and beat the alarm. The enemy having approached Celorico, Wilson, after having remained at his post there to the last moment, retreated after having destroyed the magazines. In the retreat from that place, the French came up with the rearguard of the retiring militia near the Mondego, who immediately, despite all the efforts of their officers, dispersed and fled; and Marmont, taking advantage of the consternation, pushed on to Castel Branco, where there were large magazines, which, however, were fortunately transported in safety to the south of the Tagus, while Victor Alten, with his German dragoons, crossed that river at Villa Velho, leaving the northern provinces wholly uncovered.

April 14.

April 15. Gurw. ix. 68, 69. Belm. iv. 220. Beamish, ii. 47. Jones, ii. 78. Nap. iv. 445, 448.

Urgent as affairs had now become to the north of the Tagus, Wellington would not have been diverted by these predatory alarms from his great object of attacking Soult in Andalusia; but the state of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida were such as to call for immediate attention. Notwithstanding the most

Wellington moves to the Agueda.

urgent representations of the English general, the Spanish Government had taken no steps for provisioning the former of these fortresses, and the Portuguese Regency had been so remiss in their exertions for putting the latter into a good state of defence, that it was hardly secure against a *coup-de-main*. These circumstances rendered it indispensable for Wellington to return immediately to the Agueda; and accordingly, after lingering in the neighbourhood of Badajoz a few days, in the hope that Soult, stung by the loss of that fortress, would fight a battle to retrieve his credit, he broke up for the north upon finding that he had finally retired into Andalusia; the army crossed the Tagus at Villa Velho, and resumed its old position at Fuente Guinaldo; Sir Thomas Graham, who was left with a corps of ten thousand men at Badajoz, soon repaired the breaches, and put the place in a posture of defence, while Marmont retired without loss across the frontier, and put his army into cantonments at Salamanca and on the Douro.[1]

April 21. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, April 7, 1812. Gurw. ix. 47. Belm. 220, 221 Nap. iv. 443.

Both parties, after this short but bloody campaign, stood absolutely in need of repose; and the exhausted state of the country rendered it impossible for the British army to move before the young green crops afforded a supply of food for the horses; or the French, until the harvest had afforded the means of replenishing the magazines of the men. Wellington employed this interval in the most strenuous exertions to put the frontier fortresses in a good state of defence; and as the supineness of the Spanish authorities inspired him with a serious dread "that he would lose both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz before the summer was over, by the habits of indolence and delay in the Spanish nation,"[2]

Wellington's efforts in his cantonments to supply the taken fortresses.

[2] Wellington to Sir H. Wellesley, April 28. 1812. Gurw. ix. 98.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

he took the most extraordinary measures to guard against the danger. With this view, he laid on the Portuguese Government the personal responsibility of victualling Elvas and Badajoz, and employed the whole of the carriages and mules belonging to his own army in bringing up supplies to Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, his troops being meantime quartered in such a manner as to cover the lines of transit. In this way, the object of putting both the captured fortresses in a state of defence was at length with infinite difficulty accomplished, which never would have been done by the Spanish authorities, although this year, in addition to other assistance, they got a million sterling in specie from the British Government.[1] *

[1] Nap. iv. 448, 449. Gurw. ix. 98. Wellington to Sir H. Wellesley, May 3, 1812. Ibid. ix. 111.

Napoleon's anger at the fall of Badajoz.

Great was the indignation of the French Emperor when he learned the disaster at Badajoz, which he felt the more keenly, that matters had now proceeded to such a point in the negotiations with Russia, that war in the north was plainly inevitable, and was openly prepared for by both the powers. It was entirely in consequence of his own absurd orders that the fortress had been taken; for Marmont had clearly pointed out in good time that Wellington was too well aware of the destitute condition of his army as to provisions, to be diverted from his project by an irruption into Beira; and that unless both he and Soult succoured Badajoz, it would infallibly be taken.† Though he could thus censure with

* "If the Spanish Government insist upon my placing garrisons in the forts we have taken from the enemy, and I have made over to them, and do not take measures to place and support in them proper garrisons, I now give them notice I will destroy both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz; for I cannot be tied by the leg to guard these fortresses against the consequence of their failure to garrison or provision them."—WELLINGTON *to* SIR H. WELLESLEY, *3d May* 1812. GURW. ix. 111.

† "The Emperor's orders are so precise for me to assemble my

reason no one but himself for the disaster, however, Napoleon, according to his usual custom, laid the blame in every other quarter; censured Marmont bitterly for not having acted with more vigour on the side of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida; reproached Soult that he did nothing with eighty thousand of the best troops in the world; and announced his intention, upon his return from Poland, to assume in person the direction of affairs in the Peninsula.*[1]

[1] Belm. i. 217, 218.

army in Old Castile, that whatever my own opinion may be on the subject, I consider it my duty to conform to them; but I have done so without any hope of a good result. The Emperor appears to attach great weight to the effect which my demonstrations in the north will produce on the mind of Lord Wellington. I venture to entertain a contrary opinion, as I know that that general is well aware that we have no magazines, and appreciates the immense difficulties which the country presents, from the impossibility of getting subsistence. Lord Wellington knows perfectly that the army of Portugal at this season is incapable of acting, and that if it advanced beyond the frontier it would be forced to return after a few days, after having lost all its horses. He will never be disquieted by apprehensions of a siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, as he knows we have no heavy artillery. The Emperor has ordered great works at Salamanca; he appears to forget that we have neither provisions to feed the workmen nor money to pay them, and that we are in every service on the verge of starvation."—MARMONT *to* BERTHIER, 2*d March* 1812, No. 94. BELMAS, i. Appendix.

* "Instead of studying and seeking to catch the spirit of the Emperor's instructions, you seem to have taken a pleasure in not understanding them, and to have directly carried out the reverse of their intentions. The Emperor earnestly recommends you to do your utmost to prevent forty thousand English from ruining the affairs of Spain, which will infallibly happen if the commanders of the different corps are not animated by that zeal for the public service, and pure patriotism, which can alone vanquish every obstacle, and prevent any sacrifice of the public interest to individual humour. On his return from Poland, the Emperor will himself take the command in Spain."—BERTHIER *to* MARMONT, 16*th April* 1812. BELMAS, No. 95, App. vol. i.

"The Emperor asks himself, Duke, how it is possible that six thousand English, and four or five thousand Portuguese, have carried off the magazines of Merida, advanced to the confines of Andalusia, and remained there a month in presence of your army, composed of eighty thousand of the best troops in the world, and able to assemble sixty.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Meanwhile, Napoleon deemed the time now arrived when he might begin to throw off the mask, and carry into execution his long-cherished project for the incorporation of the northern provinces of Spain with the French empire. Catalonia, accordingly, was declared an integral part of the French territory, and divided into four departments, each with their chief town, prefect, adjoint, &c., and all the other appendages of the empire. Great undertakings were at the same time set on foot, to ensure the communication between the eastern Pyrenees and the banks of the Ebro. A new highway was opened from Mongat to Cabella, a distance of ten leagues, to avoid the fire of the English cruisers, which in that part of the old road commanded its course; another from Figueras to Olot, to avoid the defiles of Castelfolet, so celebrated in the wars of the Succession; two others were opened from Palamos on the coast to Gerona; and a third commenced from that last fortress to Figueras by Pals, across the often flooded plains which lay between the great canal and the Ter. New fortified posts were every where established, and several points strongly barricadoed; in particular, the convent of the Capucines at Matara. Thus every thing conspired to indicate that Napoleon was resolutely bent on consolidating the annexation of Catalonia to the French empire; and yet never was a step more injudicious in itself, or more likely to prove prejudicial to his own interests and that of his family in that country. It at

Incorporation of Catalonia with the French empire. Jan. 26.

thousand present under arms, with a cavalry so superior in numbers? Form instantly a corps of twenty thousand men, of your best troops, and enter into the Alentejo. This order is imperative. The Emperor is distressed that so noble an army has yet achieved nothing against the English."—BERTHIER *to* SOULT, 19*th February* 1812. BELMAS, i. App No. 92, p. 625.

once entailed a burdensome acquisition on France, the evils of defending which would probably exceed its advantages; overstepped the durable barrier which nature has for ever established between the two kingdoms, in the Pyrenees; exasperated his brother, for the preservation of whose throne he had made such long-continued efforts, and alienated the affections even of his own partisans in the Peninsula, from a dynasty which thus commenced its career by inducing the partition of the monarchy.[1]

[1] See Decree, Jan. 26, 1812. Belm. i. No. 97. Appendix; and i. 225.

Considerable reductions took place in the French troops in the Peninsula in May, in consequence of the necessity to which the Emperor was reduced, of accumulating his whole disposable force to swell the enormous preparations for the Russian campaign. Dorsenne re-entered France with the imperial guard, ten thousand strong; the division Palombini was drawn from Suchet in the kingdom of Valencia; and the armies of the south, of the centre, and of Portugal, were weakened by twelve thousand veteran infantry, and two divisions of dragoons; while six Polish regiments under Chlopiki, took their course from the army of Aragon for the shores of the Vistula. The total amount of the troops thus withdrawn was little short of forty thousand men; but the Imperial muster-rolls still exhibited an army of two hundred and eighty thousand soldiers in Spain, of whom two hundred and thirty thousand were present with the eagles.* On the other hand, the British forces in Portugal at this period amounted to fifty-three thousand infantry, cavalry, and artillery, of whom seven thousand five hundred were horse; and the Portuguese were about twenty-

Reduction in the French force in the Peninsula.

* See *Imperial Muster-Rolls*, May 15, 1812. Appendix, No. I. to this chapter.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

seven thousand, in all eighty thousand men.*. But though the health of the troops materially improved in May, while they lay in cantonments on the Coa, yet such was the general sickness which prevailed, especially among the newly arrived regiments, at a subsequent period, that the whole force which Wellington could ever, during the campaign, collect under his standards, was fifty-seven thousand men, of whom twelve thousand were under the orders of Hill in Estremadura, and forty-five thousand under his own command on the Ciudad Rodrigo frontier. Thus, so immense were the resources of the French Emperor, that notwithstanding all his drafts for the Russian war, his effective forces in the Peninsula were still four times as numerous as those of the English general; and it must always be a matter of pride to the British historian, that both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz had been taken, and the tide of Imperial fortune turned into ebb, before any drafts had been made from the French armies in Spain, and when Wellington was still confronted with the immense force with which Napoleon had laid his iron grasp on the Peninsula.[1]

1 Nap. v. 618. Jones, ii. 377, Appendix. Belm. i. 227.

Improved character of the British army at this period.

The Anglo-Portuguese army, however, had now, from the experience of five successive campaigns, attained to an extraordinary degree of perfection; and its central position and water-carriage in rear, in a great measure compensated its inferiority of

* The exact numbers of the British were, on 25th March 1812,—

Infantry,	42,289
Cavalry,	7,558
Artillery,	3,322
Total,	53,169

The loss at Badajoz was more than compensated by reinforcements which arrived in May, before the troops took the field.—*Adjutant-General's Report*, Appendix, 18; JONES, vol. ii.

numbers to the vast but scattered legions of Napoleon. It was no longer a body of brave and disciplined, but inexperienced men, admirable for a single fight, but unacquainted with the varied duties, and sinking under the protracted fatigues of a campaign. Experience, the best of all instructors, had, in a few years, conferred ages of education; necessity, the mother not less of acquisition than invention, had made both soldiers and officers acquainted with their most important duties; suffering, the most effectual regulator of impetuous dispositions, had cooled down the undue vehemence of youthful aspiration into the regulated valour of tried subordination. The British army now set forth in its career, confident not merely of conquering the enemy in the field, but of prevailing over him in the campaign. The difficulties of sieges, the duties of retreat, the necessity of protracted evolutions, had become familiar to all: it was universally felt that war is a complicated as well as a difficult science, but that there were none of its contingencies with which the British soldiers were not familiar, and none of its duties to which the British generals were not adequate. For the first time in English history, a British army now took the field in numbers somewhat approaching to those of the continental powers, and with the experience of actual warfare superadded to the native courage of the Anglo-Saxon race, and the acquired energy of English freedom; and in the consequences of this combination—the campaigns of Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo—is to be seen the clearest evidence of the incalculable effect it was fitted to have produced on human affairs, and decisive proof of the universal empire to which it must have led, if its freeborn energies, like that of Rome, had been ex-

1812.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

clusively directed to military conquest, and its mission from Providence, instead of being the spreading the blessings of religion and the light of knowledge through the wilderness of nature, had been that of subjugating the states of civilized man.[1]

[1] Jones, ii. 90. Nap. v. 9, 10.

Description of the French forts at the bridge of Almarez.

The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, like the wrenching out of two huge corner-stones, loosened the whole fabric of French power in Spain: nothing was wanting but a blow at its heart, to make the whole edifice crumble into ruins. But whether to deliver that blow at Marmont in the north, or Jourdan in the centre, was the question. Wellington, judging like Napoleon that the vital point in Spain was the line of communication between Bayonne and Madrid, wisely chose the former;* but, before commencing his operations, he resolved to strike a blow at the French fortifications recently erected at Almarez, which commanded the important bridge of boats over the Tagus at that place, their shortest and best line of communication from the southern to the northern banks of the river. All the permanent bridges, from Toledo downwards, had been destroyed by one or other of the belligerents in the course of the war; and the roads leading from them, being almost all over mountain ridges, were scarcely practicable for carriages. Sensible of the importance of the only one remaining at Almarez, Napoleon had, some time before, directed Marmont to construct strong works at both its extremities, capable of securing them alike against the Spanish guerillas and the British incursions; and the French marshal had, in pursuance of his instructions, constructed forts at that important point of a very solid description.[2] On the left bank, the bridge

[2] Berthier to Marmont, July 10, 1811. Belm. i. 580.

* *Ante*, vi. 707.

was secured by the *tête-du-pont* Lugar Nuevo, a square with bastions, surrounded by a high wall, of four feet in thickness, loopholed, and inclosing a great depot of provisions. In front of that work, and to secure an eminence which commanded it, was the Fort Napoleon, a semicircular redoubt constructed of earth, and protected in the gorge with a square loopholed tower of solid masonry. At a still greater distance, about a league from the Tagus, the fort of Mirabete had been constructed in the gorges of the mountains, forming the southern barrier of the valley of the Tagus, and commanding the road to Truxillo, the only route in that quarter practicable for artillery. Finally, on the right bank of the Tagus was the Fort Ragusa, placed on an eminence a hundred yards from the river, so situated as to command the other fortifications at the bridge-head, and deprive the enemy of an advantageous point for attacking them. These works were armed with eighteen pieces of cannon, and garrisoned by a battalion and several companies of gunners; in all, about eleven hundred men.[1]

[1] Belm. i. 221, 222. Hill's Despatches, May 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 185. Nap. v. 11. Jones, ii. 93.

To destroy these formidable fortifications at this important passage, Hill was intrusted with a light column of six thousand men, including four hundred horse, and twelve light and six heavy guns. The operation, however, which had been originally projected by Wellington previous to the attack on Badajoz, was now become one of extreme difficulty; for not only was Drouet, with nine thousand men belonging to Soult's forces, lying at Hinojosa de Cordova, nearer to Merida than Hill was to Almarez, but Foy's division of Marmont's army was at Talavera, in the valley of the Tagus; and D'Armagnac, with a considerable body from the army of the centre,

Hill's preparations for the attack.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

was also in the neighbourhood of that river. Thus, when Hill advanced so far up the valley of the Tagus as Almarez, he was in a manner surrounded by enemies; for two divisions, each stronger than his own, lay at no great distance in his front, and another, by a rapid march, might from the south intercept his retreat. To provide against these dangers, Graham, with two divisions and Cotton's cavalry, was advanced to the neighbourhood of Portalegre, so as to be in a situation to advance to Hill's support if required; but still Drouet, by a rapid march, might interpose between him and Hill, and beat them in detail; and the French in the upper part of the valley of the Tagus, might suddenly fall, with superior forces, upon the troops so far pushed on as the bridge of Almarez, and destroy them before any succour arrived: and thus the utmost celerity and secrecy were essential to the success of the enterprise.[1]

[1] Nap. v. 13. Jones, ii. 93. Belm. i. 222.

Hill's attack on Almarez.

The better to deceive the enemy as to the real point of attack, rumours were spread that the invasion of Andalusia was in contemplation, and the militia of the Alentejo moved towards Niebla, to give the greater appearance of probability to the account; while the bridge at Merida, which had been broken down during the operations against Badajoz, and then only abandoned because neither the Spaniards nor Portuguese could furnish the means of drawing the guns, was restored, with the professed intention of transporting Hill's battering and pontoon train, which had been formed at Elvas, on the same destination. These precautions so completely imposed upon the enemy, that, although the bridge at Merida required a fortnight for its repair, and Hill, in consequence, could not break up from his cantonments at Almendralejos till the 12th, no suspicion

existed on the part of the French generals of the quarter where the blow was to be struck. On the morning of the 16th the troops reached Jaraicejo, and two days afterwards arrived at the mountain range which separates the valley of the Tagus from that of the Guadiana, and in the highest part of the gorge through which the castle of Mirabete was placed. By drawing a range of field-works from this fort across the pass to a fortified house on the other side of the main road, the French had completely blocked up the only route practicable for artillery from the Guadiana to Almarez. After reconnoitring the works in the pass, Hill, finding that the delay which had occurred in the march of his troops had rendered a surprise impossible, judged it most advisable not to attempt to force a passage; but, leaving his artillery at the summit of the sierra, at dark began to descend a rugged road, passable only for infantry, by the village of Romangordo, towards Almarez; and, by taking every imaginable precaution against discovery, reached the close vicinity of Fort Napoleon, unobserved by the enemy, before day-break on the following morning.[1]

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. May 16, May 18.

[1] Hill's Despatches, May 20, 1812. Gurw. ix. 186. Nap. v. 16, 17. Jones, ii. 93.

Storming of the Forts. May 19.

Though the head of the column under General Howard got to the point of attack in such good time, yet such were the difficulties of a march six miles long through the mountains, that a considerable time elapsed before the rear was sufficiently closed up to permit an attack. Fortunately, during this anxious interval, the troops were concealed by a deep intervening ravine and some small hills from the enemy's observation; and the French soldiers on Fort Napoleon were crowding the ramparts, listening to the sound of cannon which now came rolling down from Fort Mirabete, and observing the

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

volumes of smoke which mingled with the clouds on the summit of the sierra, when a loud shout broke on their ears, and the rush of British bayonets was upon them. Though surprised at the suddenness of the attack, they were not unprepared, as they had received intelligence of Hill's being in the vicinity, and the garrison of Fort Napoleon had in consequence been strongly reinforced by some troops in the neighbourhood. A crashing volley of grape and musketry at once struck the head of the British column; but the men rushed on, headed by the gallant Howard, in the most undaunted manner, and applying the scaling ladders to the scarp, commenced the escalade. The ladders were much too short for the whole height, but they enabled them to reach an intermediate ledge or *berm*, as it is technically called; and having got up, the assailants found it so broad that the ladders were a second time applied from it as a base, and the summit was reached. Instantly a loud cheer announced the success of the enterprise; the soldiers from behind came rushing over; victors and vanquished, pell-mell, were borne backwards to the central tower, which was carried in the first tumult of success. The garrison, upon this, fled in dismay to the bridge, closely followed by the pursuers, who, in the general confusion, got through the *tête-du-pont*; while the governor of Fort Ragusa, on the opposite side, seized with a sudden panic, not only cut the bridge before half his own men had got over, but hastily, and before he was attacked, abandoned his own fort, and retreated to Talavera. Thus the whole works on both sides of the river, with all their artillery and immense stores, fell into the hands of the Allies, who also made two hundred and fifty prisoners.[1]

[1] Hill's Report. Gurw. ix. 186. Nap. v. 19, 20. Jones, ii. 93, 94. Belm. i. 221, 222. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 35, 36.

among whom was the governor of Fort Napoleon, with the loss only of a hundred and eighty men. CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Having effected this brilliant exploit, Hill immediately destroyed all the forts, burned the bridge and stores, and on the same day retraced his steps to Fort Mirabete in the mountains, which, entirely isolated and environed by enemies, might now be expected to fall an easy prey. In effect, operations, with every prospect of success, were commencing next day against this stronghold, against which the heavy guns had already been brought up, when an incorrect report, transmitted by Sir William Erskine, as to Soult with a formidable force being already in Estremadura, obliged Hill, much against his will, to abandon this second prize when just about to fall into his hands, and retire to Merida, which he reached on the 26th, after having suffered no molestation from the enemy. Foy meanwhile hastened from Talavera to Almarez with his division; but arrived only in time to witness the expiring flames of the conflagration which had consumed the bridge and works, and Hill quietly resumed his old quarters in the neighbourhood of Badajoz. Wellington, however, who was aware that Erskine's false alarm was occasioned entirely by an exaggerated and confused account of Drouet's movements, and that Soult was altogether beyond the reach of doing mischief, was justly dissatisfied at this unlucky mistake, which rendered the success of the enterprise not so complete as it otherwise might have been; and he expressed his complaints on the want of judgment in separate command on the part even of his bravest generals in his private despatches to Government. But the truth is, that the evil was owing to a general cause, not imputable to any individuals as a fault;

Mirabete is saved by a false alarm, and Hill retires to Badajoz.

May 26.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

and it is part of the price which the nation pays for those free institutions, and that general intelligence to which its greatness has been owing; but which, by bringing the mass of the people, who are incapable of judging correctly on the subject, to pass an opinion on the actions of all public functionaries, paralyses them, when left to their own responsibility, by the painful reflection, that difficulty will not be considered nor failure forgiven, by those to whom, nevertheless, the final decision on all measures of importance is committed.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 28, 1812. Gurw. ix. 191. Nap. v. 21.

Defeat of Ballasteros in Andalusia. June 1.

Ballasteros took advantage of the absence of Soult, during his march towards Estremadura, to attack with his whole force, six thousand strong, a French detachment stationed at Bornos, a central position between Cadiz and Seville, which covered the principal communications between these points. This attempt, however, proved most unfortunate; and demonstrated how little reliance, notwithstanding all their experience and suffering, was to be placed on the Spanish troops. Conroux, who commanded the French, cautiously kept within his intrenched camp, as if fearful of a combat. This led the presumptuous Spaniards to imagine that he would fall an easy prey; and they accordingly assaulted the intrenched camp in a very disorderly manner. The result might easily have been foreseen. So far from waiting for the enemy behind his field-works, Conroux sallied forth unexpectedly upon them as they first came within fire, and instantly put them to the rout with the loss of above fifteen hundred killed and wounded. The remainder, utterly disorganized, were driven for refuge to their old quarters in the camp of St Roque, under the cannon of Gibraltar. This disaster was the more sensibly felt by Welling-

ton, that it enabled Soult, now relieved from all disquietude about his rear, to reinforce Drouet in Estremadura with two divisions of cavalry and one of infantry, which raised his force to twenty-one thousand men, of whom three thousand were superb horse, and at a time when the imprudent daring of the English dragoons under Slade drew them, in an action with the French cavalry under Lallemand, into an ambuscade, where they were ultimately defeated with the loss of one hundred and fifty men.[1]

[1] Jones, ii. 95. Tor. v. 29, 30. Nap. v. 61, 63. Gurw. ix. 240. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 56, 57.

Defensive measures in Estremadura.

As matters had now assumed a serious aspect in Estremadura, and Wellington was anxious to be relieved from all anxiety in that quarter before undertaking his projected offensive movement in the northern provinces, he reinforced Hill, who had assumed the command there in consequence of Sir Thomas Graham having been obliged, by ill health, to return to England to the amount of twenty thousand British and Portuguese, and three thousand Spaniards, of whom two thousand five hundred were horse; and recommended him, if pressed, to fall back and give battle on the old field of Albuera. Drouet's force, though somewhat inferior in numerical amount, was fully equal in real efficiency, from the homogeneous quality of the troops of which it was composed; and every thing therefore seemed to prognosticate a second important battle to the south of Badajoz. Nevertheless, it did not take place, and the early period of the campaign passed away without any event of note in that quarter. Drouet, whose instructions from Soult were discretionary, to fight or not as occasion might offer, was too strongly impressed with the recollection of the dreadful battle last year at Albuera, to venture upon a second action

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

on equal terms on the same ground, and accordingly he did not advance beyond Almendralejos; while Hill, whom the brilliant and daring exploits at Aroyos Molinos and Almarez had inspired with a well-founded confidence both in his own talents and the quality of his soldiers, had the rare patriotic spirit to obtain the mastery of the strongest motives of individual ambition, and risk nothing where he might fairly anticipate immortal fame, lest he should interfere with the grand operations undertaken by Wellington in person on the banks of the Tormes.[1]

[1] Wellington to Hill, June 6, 1812. Gurw. ix. 218. Nap. v. 63.

Wellington's preparations for the invasion of Spain.

Wellington's preparations for this important movement had now nearly reached their maturity. With infinite care he had established a powerful military police in his army, the officers of which were intrusted with the most extensive powers of summary chastisement, and which promised to produce, as in effect it did, that incomparable discipline and order in the field, by which, not less than its astonishing victories, this army was ever afterwards distinguished. A month's provisions for the army was by the greatest efforts got together, and stored in Ciudad Rodrigo, even though the scarcity of money at headquarters at that period was such, owing to the vast preparations of France and Russia for the gigantic contest approaching in the north of Europe, as well as the long-continued drain of the Peninsular war, that specie was absolutely not to be had, and the English general had never, since the commencement of the contest, been reduced to such straits by its want.[1] Several hundred carts, which had been collected for the siege of Badajoz, were suddenly moved towards Ciudad Rodrigo, from the neighbourhood of that fortress and the Caldao river, where they had been hitherto employed in the important work of

[1] Gurw. ix. 142, 143.

victualling its garrison for two months, which had at length been accomplished; the heavy howitzers and some eighteen-pounders, secretly fitted on travelling carriages at Almeida; and by the genius of Colonel Sturgeon of the engineers, the broken arch in the noble Roman bridge of Alcantara, a hundred feet wide and nearly a hundred and thirty high, was restored by means of a suspension communication formed of cables, so strongly twisted together, and fastened at either end, that the heaviest guns passed over in safety, and a more direct line of intercourse across the Tagus was thus opened between the two British armies than that of which they had formerly made use at Villa Velho. [1] Jones, ii. 95, 96. Gurw. ix. 227, 230. Nap. iv. 372.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

So vast were the French forces still in the Peninsula, notwithstanding all the drafts for the Russian war, that Soult was not only secure in Andalusia, but at the very time when Wellington was preparing for a great irruption into the northern provinces of Spain, he was taking measures for an invasion of the southern ones of Portugal. His plans for this purpose had, for nearly two years, been in preparation; and with such prudence were they conceived, and so large was the force at his disposal for their execution, that it was a mere question of time which general should move first; and which, by obtaining the initiative, succeed in driving the other from the Peninsula. For the success of this design it was indispensable that his rear should be secured, save against an incursion from the isle of Leon, in which quarter Victor's gigantic lines appeared a sufficient barrier; and with this view he had resolved to crush Ballasteros, reduce Tarifa, Alicante, and Carthagena; and, having thus pacified Andalusia, intrust its defence to Victor and the Spanish troops, nearly twenty

Soult's plans at this period.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

thousand strong, raised in the province; while he himself, with his whole disposable force, about forty thousand veteran troops, should carry the war into the Alentejo, and threaten Lisbon on its least protected side. The effect of this, he hoped, even in the least favourable view, would be to draw back Wellington to his old stronghold at Torres Vedras; Marmont could, meanwhile, operate on his retiring columns; and, even if he were still able to make head against both, still the result would be, that the credit of the French arms would be restored, new fields of plunder opened, and the war driven up into a corner of the Peninsula. The repulse at Tarifa, in the close of the preceding year, had delayed this project; but the rashness and rout of Ballasteros at Bornos had again smoothed the way for its execution—he only waited for the reaping of the harvest, to collect provisions for the enterprise: in the mean while, the better to conceal his real object, he began a serious bombardment of the long-beleaguered isle of Leon; and huge mortars, constructed to carry three miles, from the advanced works of Trocadero, now for the first time carried the flames of war into the streets of Cadiz.[1]

May 16. [1] Nap. v. 57, 58. Belm. i. 228. Soult's Papers in Nap. *ut supra.*

Forces of the French in Spain.

From intercepted returns which at this period fell into Wellington's hands through the never-ceasing activity of the Spanish guerillas, the real force at the disposal of the French marshals was accurately ascertained, and it was still much more considerable than he had been led to imagine. Suchet had seventy-six thousand men still in Catalonia and Valencia, of which sixty thousand were present with the eagles; forty-nine thousand, of whom thirty-eight thousand were effective, composed the army of the north in Biscay and Navarre, of which two divisions were destined to reinforce Marmont; nineteen thousand,

nearly all effective, lay under Jourdan at Madrid, and might be reckoned on as a reserve to support any quarter which might be exposed to danger; while in the front of the battle, Soult, with sixty-three thousand, of whom fifty-six thousand were present with the eagles, occupied Andalusia and the southern parts of Estremadura; and Marmont with seventy thousand, of whom fifty-two thousand were effective, occupied Leon, old Castile, and the Asturias, besides twelve thousand who were on the march to join him from France—in all, three hundred thousand men, of whom two hundred and forty thousand were effective in the field, besides forty thousand Spaniards, who had been enrolled under the Imperial banners and brought to a very efficient state: a mighty array—strong in its numbers, its generals, its discipline, and its recollections; but weakened by internal divisions, paralysed by the devastation of plunder, scattered for the necessity of subsistence! Into the midst of this host of enemies Wellington was about to throw himself with sixty thousand effective men, of whom forty thousand were under his own immediate orders, and twenty thousand under those of Hill; but this force was confident of victory, skilfully led and amply supplied; possessed of an internal line of communication, enjoying the confidence of the inhabitants, and strengthened by the justice with which its proceedings had been directed.[1]

[1] Imperial Muster-Rolls in Appendix, No. I. Nap. v. 100, 101. Gurw. ix. 225, 238, 239.

All things being in readiness, Wellington, on the 13th June, CROSSED THE AGUEDA, and commenced that campaign which has rendered his name and his country immortal. Four days afterwards he reached Salamanca, and crossed the Tormes in four columns by the fords of Santa Martha and Los Cantos;

Advance of Wellington to Salamanca.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Marmont retiring as he advanced, after throwing garrisons into the forts of the town, and the castle of Alba de Tormes, which commanded an important passage over the river. Then was seen the profound hatred with which the Peninsular people were animated against their Gallic oppressors, and the vast amount of evil which they had received at their hands. Salamanca instantly became a scene of rejoicing; the houses were illuminated, the people alternately singing and weeping for joy; while the British army passed triumphantly through the shouting crowd, and took a position on the hill of San Christoval, about three miles in advance of the town. It was no wonder such joy was evinced at their deliverance from a bondage which had now endured four years: independent of innumerable acts of extortion and oppression during their stay, the French had destroyed thirteen out of twenty-five convents, and twenty-two out of twenty-five colleges, in that celebrated seat of learning, the stones of which were built up into three forts, which now, in a military point of view, constituted the strength of the place.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 18, 1812. Gurw. ix. 241. Nap. v. 122. Belm. i. 229.

Siege of the Forts. June 17.

San Vincente, named from the large convent which it enclosed, and situated on a perpendicular cliff which overhung the Tormes, was the most important of these strongholds. The two other forts, called San Cajetano and La Merced, were also placed on the loftiest of the steep eminences with which this romantic city abounds; and the whole three had bomb-proof buildings, deep ditches, perpendicular scarps and counterscarps, and the other defences which could only be reduced by a regular siege. They were accordingly immediately invested, and on the second day after ground had been broken, the heavy guns began to batter in breach; and the

artillery ammunition having become scanty from this unexpected resistance, an opening made in the palisades, considerable injury done to the scarp, and a part of the wall of the convent within fallen, an attempt was made to carry the forts of San Cajetano and La Merced by escalade. The attempt, however, though gallantly conducted by General Bowes,* failed, after one hundred and twenty men had fallen, from the entrance being still blocked up and impassable: and the operations were again unavoidably suspended from want of ammunition; while the aspect of affairs on the outside of the city seemed to prognosticate an immediate and decisive battle.[1]

June 23. [1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 25, 1812. Gurw. ix. 255. Nap. v. 128, 133. Belm. i. 228, 229.

Marmont collected his whole army on the Douro, between the 16th and 19th, with the exception of Bonnet's division, which was still in the Asturias, and moved forward with about thirty-six thousand men, of whom three thousand two hundred were cavalry, and seventy-two pieces of cannon. Wellington had taken every imaginable precaution, by directing the Conde d'Amarante to move out of the north of Portugal, Castanos with the army of Galicia to attack Astorga, and all the guerilla chiefs in the north of Spain to harass the enemy's rear, to prevent such an accumulation of force against him; but the French gave themselves very little concern about these desultory efforts, and directed almost their whole force against the English army. Upon the approach of so formidable a body, concentrated

Marmont's ineffectual attempt to raise the siege.

June 20.

* This brave man was slightly wounded early in the attack, as he headed the troops, and removed to a little distance in the rear to have the wound dressed. The surgeon was in the act of doing so, when the cry arose that the troops were driven back: Bowes, hurt as he was, immediately hastened to the front to rally the men, led them back to the foot of the walls, and was then shot through the heart.—*See* WELLINGTON *to* LORD LIVERPOOL, 25*th June* 1812, GURWOOD, ix. 255.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. in their position on the heights of San Christoval, a great battle was expected in both armies for the following day. The crisis, however, passed over without any event of importance: Marmont, after lying two days close to the British line, deemed it too strongly posted to admit of successful attack, and decamping on the 23d, made a show of crossing the Tormes and threatening the British line of communication, in the hope that they would in consequence draw back in that quarter, and an opportunity might occur of carrying off the beleaguered garrisons. In this hope, however, he was disappointed; for Wellington stood firm, merely passing a brigade of Bock's German horse across the river to watch their movements. Next day Marmont sent twelve thousand men across the Tormes, and seemed disposed to follow with his whole force: but Bock's steady dragoons retired slowly and in admirable order before them, and Graham, with two divisions, was immediately sent across to restore the balance on the other side; upon discovering which the enemy desisted from their attempt, repassed the Tormes by the fords of Huerta, and resumed their former position in front of San Christoval.[1] *

June 23.

June 24.

[1] Gurw. ix. 242, and 254, 255. Jones, ii. 97, 98. Nap. v. 129, 131. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 38, 39. Belm. iv. 439, 447.

Capture of the forts. June 27.

While these movements were going forward in the rear of the besiegers, a fresh supply of ammunition was received in the trenches, and the fire of the breaching batteries renewed in a much more effective manner.

* The faculty of rapidly withdrawing the mind from one subject and fixing it on another of a different description, is one of the surest marks of the highest class of intellectual powers. Of this a remarkable instance occurred at this period: for Wellington, on the day when he lay at San Christoval, in front of the French army, hourly expecting a battle, wrote out in the field a long and minute memorial on the establishment of a bank at Lisbon on the principles of the English ones.—*See* WELLINGTON *to* SIR CHARLES STUART, *25th June* 1812, GURWOOD, ix. 249.

On the evening of the 26th, red hot shot, which had been prepared in the town, were thrown into the forts, which speedily set them on fire; and though the garrisons at first, with great activity, extinguished the flames, yet the bombardment having been continued with much vigour all night, next morning the convent of San Vincente was in a blaze, and the breach of Cajetano so much widened that it was plainly practicable, and the storming party was formed. The white flag was then hoisted from Cajetano, and a parley ensued; but Wellington, deeming it only an artifice to gain time, allowed them only five minutes to make an unconditional surrender, and that period having elapsed without submission being made, the troops were ordered to advance to the assault. Very little resistance, however, was made: the conflagration in San Vincente paralysed the garrisons, and the troops got in at breaches more formidable than those of Ciudad Rodrigo with trifling loss. Seven hundred men were made prisoners; thirty pieces of cannon, and large stores in arms, ammunition, and clothing, fell into the hands of the victors, who, since the commencement of the siege, had sustained in the field and in the trenches a loss of five hundred men.[1]

Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 30, 1812. Gurw. ix. 261, 262. Nap. v. 133, 134. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 39. Belm. iv. 449, 451.

On learning the fall of the forts, Marmont immediately retired, withdrawing the garrison from Alba de Tormes; the works of which, as well as those of the Salamanca strongholds, were immediately blown up by the British general. It then appeared evident that Wellington had been in error, in not having attacked his adversary when he lay before him at San Christoval; for he now retreated to the Douro, in order to await the reinforcements from Bonnet in the Asturias and Caffarelli in Biscay, on their march

Marmont retires behind the Douro.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

to join him; and Joseph, with the army of the centre, was also in motion, to fall on the right flank of the invader: so that an overwhelming force might soon be expected to accumulate around the latter, and compel his retreat. Aware of the succours which were approaching, Marmont withdrew behind the Douro, and strongly occupied the fortified bridges of Zamora, Toro, and Tordesillas, which defended the principal passages of that river. Wellington followed, and reached the southern bank, where preparations were immediately commenced for forcing the passage, and the army waited quietly till the waters, which were subsiding, should have fallen sufficiently to render the fords practicable. The position here of the French, however, guarded by a hundred pieces of cannon, was so exceedingly strong, that but little expectation could be entertained of forcing it in front; but Wellington had been led to form sanguine hopes, that, being entirely destitute of magazines or stores of any kind, so large a body of men would soon consume the whole subsistence in their vicinity, and be compelled either to fall back to less wasted districts, or detach so largely in quest of food, as might furnish an opportunity for striking a blow at their centre. In this hope, however, he was disappointed: the skill which long experience had given the French in extorting supplies out of a country, again on this, as on many previous occasions, exceeded what was conceived possible; and, on the 7th, Marmont was joined by Bonnet's division from the Asturias, which augmented his force to forty-five thousand men.[1] *

July 2.

July 7.

1 Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 7, 1812. Gurw. ix. 275. Jones, ii. 100, 101. Marmont to Berthier, July 1, 1812. Belm. i. 653.

* "The army of Portugal has now been surrounded for the last six weeks, and scarcely a letter reaches its commander: but the system of organized rapine and plunder, and the extraordinary discipline so long maintained in the French armies, enable it to subsist at the expense of the total ruin of the country in which it has been placed; and I am not

It was now Wellington's turn to feel anxious; for not only was the army in his front superior to his own, but Caffarelli, with ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, was rapidly approaching, and his own supplies were brought up with great difficulty, by a long line of communication, from the Agueda, which would erelong be threatened by the army of the centre, which was fast coming up from Madrid. It soon appeared that the French general, confident in his received and expected reinforcements, was about to assume the offensive; and his measures with this view were taken with great ability. He first moved a considerable body of men towards his own right, as if with the design of crossing the Douro at Toro, this of course inducing a parallel movement of Wellington to his left; then, in order still further to impose upon the enemy, two French divisions actually passed over at that place, and made a show of turning the British left. In the night, however, this movement was suddenly reversed: Marmont countermarched with all his forces; those which had crossed at Toro, were quickly withdrawn and moved up the right bank of the river; and such was the expedition used, that by morning they were at Tordesillas, twenty-five miles above the former town! Immediately the river was passed at the latter point, the troops moved on with extraordinary celerity to Nava del Rey, on the left bank; and before nightfall the whole French army was concentrated in that neighbourhood,—some of their divisions having marched forty and even forty-five miles, without a longer halt than for a few hours.[1]

Able movements of Marmont, and Wellington's retreat.

July 15.

July 16.

July 17.

Belm. i. 131. Jones, ii. 101, 102. Nap. v. 136, 149.

certain that Marshal Marmont has not now at his command a greater quantity of provisions and supplies of every sort than we have."—WELLINGTON *to* LORD BATHURST, 21*st July* 1812, GURWOOD, ix. 298.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

This able manœuvre of Marmont's reduced Wellington to great difficulties. It re-established the communication between the army of Portugal and that under Joseph, which was rapidly approaching from the Guadarama pass, and which, with Caffarelli's reserves, would erelong raise the numerical amount under the French general to nearly seventy thousand men, with a hundred and forty guns. In addition to this, the diversions on which the English general had calculated to lighten the load likely to fall on him when he advanced into the centre of Spain, had, from one cause or another, proved entirely illusory. The Spaniards had been besieging Astorga, with twelve thousand men, for above a month; but, although the breach was practicable, their ammunition failing, and the garrison only eleven hundred strong, nothing could persuade them to hazard an assault. Mina had just received a severe defeat, which had seriously paralysed the guerillas in the whole northern provinces; and the accounts from Cadiz were most discouraging. Soult's bombardment had at last struck a great panic into the citizens of that luxurious city, which had hitherto felt only the excitement and suffered none of the horrors of war; the British mediations in the affair of the revolted colonies had failed, under circumstances which left no room to doubt that their influence with the Cortes was on the wane; and it was already suspected, what has since been ascertained by authentic evidence, that many members of that body had opened secret negotiations with Joseph; and that, if he would recognise the democratic constitution, they were prepared to acknowledge his authority, and admit the French troops within the walls of Cadiz.[1]

Wellington's difficulties from slowness of the Spaniards.

July 4.

[1] Nap. v. 143, 146. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 14, 1812. Gurw. ix. 284, 289. Belm. i. 231.

But, disquieting as these accounts were, they were

neither the only nor the greatest of Wellington's mortifications at this critical juncture. It had been arranged with him, and directed by Government, that Lord William Bentinck, who commanded in Sicily, should, at the same time that he himself invaded Spain from the westward, menace it from the east, where Alicante and Carthagena still offered a secure basis for offensive operations. Wellington had relied much on the effect of this diversion; and although, if earlier undertaken, it might have been attended with still greater results, by repulsing the storm of Taragona, and preventing the siege of Valencia, yet at the eleventh hour, it promised, if ably conducted, to be followed by the most important consequences. He anticipated from it the recovery of one, perhaps both of these fortresses; and expected that Joseph and the army of the centre, distracted by the pressing necessity of succouring Suchet and the eastern provinces, would be unable to detach in any considerable degree to the army of Portugal, or interfere with his operations in Leon and Castile. It may readily be conceived, therefore, what was the disappointment of the English general, when he received intelligence, as he lay fronting Marmont on the Douro, that Lord William Bentinck, instead of following out the concerted and directed plan of operations on the east of Spain, had been seduced into a hazardous and eccentric expedition to the coast of Italy, where no effective co-operation could be expected from the unwarlike inhabitants, and immediate success, even if attainable, could terminate only in ultimate disaster; and that, owing to this unhappy change, the whole army of the centre, was disposable against him. And greater still was the immediate embarrassment produced by

Failure of Lord W. Bentinck in this projected co-operation.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

discovering, that, at the very time when he was beyond all example straitened for money, in consequence of the unparalleled absorption of specie in the Russian expedition, and consequent impossibility of purchasing it, save at an enormous premium, in the south of Europe, no less than four millions of dollars, which his agents might otherwise have got at Gibraltar and Minorca, had been swept away by those of Lord William for the charges of this tempting but Quixotic enterprise.[1]*

1 Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 14, 1812. Gurw. ix. 287, 289, and 290.

Wellington retreats across the Guarena.

These considerations, and above all the near approach of the army of the centre with fourteen thousand men, made Wellington feel the necessity

* "I have a letter from Lord W. Bentinck of the 9th June. He had sent the first division of the expedition to Minorca, and the second was about to go to Sardinia: but neither of them for the operations concerted on the eastern coast of the Peninsula. He has determined, in lieu thereof, to try his fortune in Italy, with 15,000 instead of 6000, which he was to send into Spain. I hope he will succeed, but I doubt it; there is no solid foundation for his plan: he has not even fixed the degrees of latitude for his operations, much less the place of his landing."—WELLINGTON *to* GENERAL CLINTON, 16*th July* 1812, GURWOOD, ix. 293.

"Lord William's decision is fatal to the campaign, at least at present. If he should land any where in Italy, he will, as usual, be obliged to re-embark; and we shall have lost a golden opportunity here."—WELLINGTON *to* SIR H. WELLESLEY, 15*th July* 1812, *ibid.* ix. 287.

"War cannot be carried on without money: we are to find money as we can, at the most economical rate of exchange; and then comes Lord William to Gibraltar, and carries off 4,000,000 of dollars, giving a shilling for each more than we can give; and, after all, he sends his troops upon some scheme to the coast of Italy, and not to the eastern coast of the Peninsula, as ordered by Government and arranged with me."—WELLINGTON *to* SIR CHARLES STUART, 15*th July* 1812, *ibid.* 289.

Lord W. Bentinck was a most amiable man, and possessed many valuable qualities; but they were suited rather to pacific administration than warlike combinations, as his government in India evinced; and he was strongly tinged with those speculative views in regard to the regeneration of society then so prevalent, and which have since so generally terminated in disappointment, at least in the states of the Old World.

of a retreat. In the commencement of this retrograde movement, however, the British right wing was exposed to considerable danger, from which it was only saved by the admirable firmness of the troops engaged. Marmont brought the greater part of his forces to bear on the fourth and light divisions, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, which were then posted on the Trabancos, and which, during the night of the 17th, were, from the vast accumulation of the enemy in their front, in great danger. At daybreak June 18. on the 18th, the French troops commenced the attack; but Cotton, with his two divisions, contrived to maintain his position till the cavalry of Bock, Le Marchant, and Alten, which Wellington immediately brought up in person, came to their support. The whole then retired in admirable order through Castrejon, and towards the Guarena, till they effected their junction with the main body of the army, which was now concentrated on that stream. The spectacle which ensued during this retreat was one of the most beautiful which ever occurred in modern war. The air was sultry; the country open like the downs in England; the troops, arrayed on either side in dense masses, marched close together, so near indeed, that the officers in courtesy lowered their swords or touched their caps to each other; while the intervening space, hardly half musket-shot across, was filled with the German cavalry, who seemed stationed there to prevent a collision of the infantry till the proper season arrived. Forty French guns were collected on the high grounds on the French side of the river; and it was under the fire from these that Cotton's two divisions crossed the stream, after the two hostile bodies had marched for ten miles in this extraordinary state of close proximity.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 295, 296. Jones ii. 102, 103. Nap. v. 151, 153. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 141, 42.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Nevertheless, such was the thirst of the men from the excessive heat, that the fourth division stopped for a few moments, as they forded the water, to drink. The light division, whom long practice had rendered expert in all the arts of war, sipped the cool wave in their hands without halting.

Repulse of a cavalry attack at Castrillo.

Emboldened by this retreat, Marmont now moved the cavalry of his right wing, under Carier, across the Guarena at Castrillo, and began to push a column forward in order to gain possession of an important ridge which lay above that town, at the junction of the Guarena with the little stream of the Canizal. Wellington, however, had expected this movement; and just as the French horsemen were entering the valley they were met by Alten's dragoons, and stopped by the successive charges of those gallant cavaliers. More cavalry, however, advanced to the support of the French, upon which Wellington ordered the 27th and 40th regiments, under Colonel Stubbs, to attack the flank of their foot while the 3d dragoons came up to their support These movements were entirely successful. The infantry came down the hill with an impetuous charge of the bayonet on the enemy's foot; and Alten's men being thus relieved, turned fiercely on their horse, who speedily gave way, and were driven back with the loss of one cannon, two hundred and forty prisoners, among whom was General Carier himself, and three hundred killed and wounded. The troops on both sides were highly excited by this action and their close proximity to each other, and a general battle was universally and eagerly expected; but the day passed over without any further event.[1] Neither general was prepared for the combat. Marmont's men were worn out with two

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 26, 1812. Gurw. ix. 296, 297. Nap. v. 154, 155. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 41, 42.

days and a half of incessant and rapid marching; and Wellington felt too strongly the great superiority of the enemy's artillery, which was nearly double his own, to choose to hazard a battle, unless an occasion should offer of giving it with advantage. CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

The fatigues of both armies, and the extraordinary heat of the weather, which now glowed with all the ardour of the dogdays, prevented either host from moving on the following day till four in the afternoon, when Marmont took the initiative, and drawing back his right, advanced his left, and moved his whole force up the course of the Guarena, which there runs nearly due north, along the ridge of high downs which forms the right bank of that stream. The English general moved in a parallel line along the heights on the left bank, and crossing the upper Guarena at Vallesa and El Olmo, took post for the night on the high table-land of Vallesa, where every preparation was made for a battle on the succeeding day. Marmont, however, instead of fighting there, continued his movement on the succeeding morning by his left; and, passing the English position, crossed the Guarena near Canta la Piedra, and pressing rapidly forward, soon gained the immense plateau which stretches thence to the neighbourhood of SALAMANCA. Wellington followed in a parallel line on a corresponding ridge of heights on his side of the river, and the imposing spectacle of the 18th was again repeated, but on a much grander scale; for the whole of both armies were now massed together, and they marched on parallel heights within musket-shot of each other, and in the most perfect array, as the horse artillery and cavalry on either side hovered around the moving hosts, ready to take advantage of the slightest disorder that might ensue,

Movements on both sides during the retreat to San Christoval. July 19.

July 20.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. July 20.

or dash into the first chasm that appeared. Not a rank was broken, however, nor an opening left in either of these noble armies. Like one man, five-and-forty thousand moved on either side, while not a straggler nor a carriage was left behind them on their track; and, but for a few cannon-shot which occasionally interrupted the impressive stillness of the scene, it might have been supposed that they were allied troops executing evolutions on a magnificent scale on a chosen field day. Towards evening, however, it became manifest that the British were outflanked, and that they could not overtake the enemy so as to prevent their junction with the army of the centre; and Wellington therefore abandoned the parallel march, and falling back towards Salamanca, encamped for the night on the heights of Caboza Vellosa; while the sixth division and Alten's cavalry, by a forced march, reached and secured the important position of San Christoval in front of that city.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 297. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 42, 43. Nap. v. 158, 159. Jones ii. 103, 104.

British retreat to the neighbourhood of Salamanca.

The manœuvres of these interesting days had turned entirely to the interest of the French marshal. Not only had he succeeded in assuming the initiative and taking the lead in operation, a matter always of the highest importance in war, but he had outflanked his opponent, and, by his indefatigable activity, changed his position from his front to his right flank, and interposed between the English army and the great road to Madrid. Nothing now could prevent Marmont from effecting his junction with the army of the centre, which was within a few days' march; and the English general, greatly outnumbered, would then have no alternative but a retreat to the Portuguese frontier. Severely mortified at this untoward result, but still resolved not to hazard

the fate of the war on an action, unless its chances appeared to be favourable, Wellington, on the 21st, drew back his whole army to its old ground on the heights of San Christoval; while Marmont followed with his forces, and extended his left wing across the Tormes, so as to seize the road from Salamanca to Ciudad Rodrigo and threaten the British communications. To counteract this, Wellington made a corresponding flank movement, by the bridge and fords of Salamanca, and halted for the night on the heights near the left bank, still covering the city, and re-establishing his communications with Ciudad Rodrigo; and on the following morning the army was drawn out in position on that ground, extending from two bold rocky heights, called the Arapeiles, to the Tormes, below the fords of Santa Martha.[1]

July 21. July 22. [1] Jones ii. 104, 105. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 24, 1812. Gurw. ix. 301. Nap. v. 160, 161.

The situation of the British general was now very critical; for not only was the army of the centre, fourteen thousand strong, rapidly approaching, but intelligence arrived in the night that Clausel, with the cavalry and artillery of the army of the north, had arrived so close in the rear of the French, that the junction of that additional force also would reinforce Marmont on the following day. Nothing could prevent the junction of these formidable reinforcements with the French army; and it was obviously, therefore, the policy of its general to remain on the defensive, and shun a general engagement till they had arrived. But in this decisive moment the star of England prevailed. Marmont was aware that he would be superseded in his command by the arrival of Joseph, or Jourdan, the senior marshal in Spain: the retreat of Wellington, and his declining to attack when formerly in position at San Christoval, had inspired the French general with a mistaken idea of

Critical situation of the English army.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

his character; and he now openly aspired to the glory, before they came up, of forcing the English army to evacuate Salamanca, or possibly gaining a decisive victory, and snatching from the brows of its general the laurels of Busaco and Torres Vedras. Influenced by these feelings, the French marshal displayed an extraordinary degree of activity at this crisis; and observing that the two rocky heights of the Arapeiles were unoccupied on the British right, he pushed, at noon, a body of infantry out of the wood, where the principal part of his army was concealed, who stole unperceived round the more distant of them and gained possession of it. This success rendered Wellington's position very critical; for Marmont immediately crowned the height he had won with heavy artillery, which commanded the only line by which the British army could have retreated in case of disaster: while the French, encouraged by the result of their first attempt, made a dash at the second height; but here they were anticipated by the British, who gained the hill and kept it.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 302, 303. Nap. v. 162, 163. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 44.

Movements of both armies immediately before the battle.

The acquisition of the more distant Arapeiles by the enemy, rendered necessary a change of position on Wellington's part. The first and light divisions, accordingly, were brought up to front the enemy's troops on the right, and the whole army changed its front; what was lately the right became the left, while the new right was pushed as far as Aldea Tejada, on the Ciudad Rodrigo road. The commissariat and baggage waggons, also, were ordered to the rear- and the dust of their trains was already visible to both armies on the highway to that fortress. This circumstance, joined to the British troops being only here and there visible, where the hollows of the ground opened a vista of part of their array, led

Marmont to suppose that a general retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo was in preparation: and in fact he was not far wrong in his guess; for there can be no doubt, that in that, or at latest the following night, this retrograde movement would have been undertaken. Fearing that they would get out of reach before his forces were fully concentrated, at two o'clock in the afternoon he took his resolution. Thomière's division, covered by fifty guns, which commenced a furious cannonade on the British columns within their reach, was pushed to the extreme left, to menace the Ciudad Rodrigo road: he was followed by Brennier and Maucunne; while the march of all the French divisions towards the centre was hastened, in order, with the remainder of the army, comprising four divisions, to fall on the flank of the British as they defiled past the French Arapeiles.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 302. Nap. v. 164. 166. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 44, 45. Belm. i. 232, 233.

Thomière's division, which headed the hostile array, reached the Pic of Miranda, while a French regiment won the village of Arapeiles, by which it was intended the main body of their army should fall perpendicularly on the British; but they were speedily driven from the greater part of it again, and a fierce struggle was going forward. Meanwhile, Thomière's division, followed by Brennier's, exactly like that of the Russian centre in performing a similar flank movement in presence of the enemy at Austerlitz,* advanced too rapidly, and a chasm, at first small but rapidly increasing, appeared between their divisions and that of Maucunne, which succeeded them and formed the nearest part of the centre. Wellington had descended from the English Arapeiles when intelligence of this false movement was brought him: instantly, he returned to the height, and with a glass

False movement of the French left.

* *Ante*, v. 477.

CHAP. LXIII.

1812.

surveyed, shortly but with close attention, their left wing, now entirely separated from the centre. Immediately his resolution was taken: "At last I have them!" was his emphatic exclamation, as he took the glass from his eye: orders were sent out to the commanders of divisions with extraordinary celerity; and turning to the Spanish general Alava, who stood by his side, he said, "Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu![1]"

1 Gurw. ix. 303. Nap. v. 166, 167. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 46. Belm. i. 231. Jackson's Life of Wellington, ii. 221.

Wellington's dispositions of attack.

So rapid were the movements, so instantaneous the onset of the British, that it seemed as if the spirit of a mighty wizard had suddenly transfused itself into the whole host. Independent of the imprudent extension of their left, Wellington had the advantage of his opponents in another particular; for his line formed the chord, while they were toiling round the arc, and consequently his dispositions were made with much greater celerity, and his troops in a much more concentrated position than theirs could be. Instant use was made of this advantage. The first and light divisions, under Generals Campbell and Alten, and forming the left of the army, were placed in reserve behind the Arapeiles hill; the fifth division, under General Leith, was moved from the centre to the right, which now consisted of that division, the third, and the fourth, under Pakenham and Cole; the sixth and seventh, under Clinton and Hope, were in reserve immediately behind them; the third division, under Pakenham, supported by D'Urban's cavalry, formed the extreme right of the army; while the first and light divisions, and Pack's Portuguese, all on the highest ground, were disposed in broad masses as a reserve. When this disposition was completed, the army formed a line in *echellon*, with the right in front.

CHAP. LXIII.

1812.

The attack was to be made first in that quarter; the onset was to fall on the French disunited, scattered, and partly in march; and Wellington, like Frederick at Leuthen and Rosbach, and Napoleon at Austerlitz,* was to give another example of the wonderful effects of the oblique mode of attack, when applied by a skilful general, and falling on an unwary adversary.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 303. Nap. v. 167, 168. Jones, ii. 106. Jom. iv. 234.

Marmont's object in the early part of the day had been to assume a good defensive position; but at two in the afternoon this design was exchanged for that of a vigorous offensive, if a favourable opportunity should occur; and it was in order to facilitate this object that Thomière's division had been sent to occupy the high ground on the extreme left, which has already been mentioned. No sooner did he observe the concentration of troops on the British right, than he ordered Maucunne and Brennier, with their respective divisions, to move to his support, and they were in the act of doing so when the tempest fell upon them. Thus, when the British line, in close order and admirable array, assailed the French, Thomière's division on their extreme left was two leagues from their centre, and Maucunne and Brennier imperfectly filled up the gap, being themselves separated by a distinct interval both from the one and the other. In vain Marmont, who from the summit of the French Arapeiles discovered the danger, strove to guard against it, and dispatched orders to his left to close in again to the centre,[2] and to the

French dispositions, and commencement of the battle.

[2] Marmont to Joseph, July 25, 1812. Belm. i. 664. Pièces Just. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 47, 48.

* "Imitating the example of Frederick at Rosbach, or rather my own at Austerlitz, he allowed the separation of our left to be decidedly pronounced, and then commenced the attack on the height of the Arapeiles by Beresford, and by an oblique march threw the weight of his force on the extreme left, which threatened to turn him."—JOMINI, *Vie de Napoleon*, iv. 23.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

centre divisions to hasten to the left: before his orders could reach those distant columns, the British bayonets were upon them.

Progress of the battle, and wound of Marmont.

The dark mass of troops which occupied the English Arapeiles, "rushing," as an eyewitness relates, "violently down the interior slope of the mountain, entered the valley between them and the enemy amidst a storm of bullets which seemed to shear away the very surface of the earth over which the soldiers moved." Tranquil on the summit of the French Arapeiles, Marmont trusted that this terrible tempest would arrest the advance of the British infantry; nor was he disquieted even by their gallant advance in the midst of it, till he beheld Pakenham's division and D'Urban's cavalry move at right angles directly across Thomière's line of march, at the foot of the Peak of Miranda, while other broad masses of crimson uniforms were marching against him in front. Aware at once of the danger, he hurried in person towards the spot, when the accidental explosion of a shell from a distant British battery stretched him on the plain, with a broken arm and severe wound in the side. His fall, however, probably made little difference on the issue of the battle; for its fate was already decided by the scattered position of the French divisions and the suddenness of the British attack.[1]

[1] Belm. i. 232, 233. Marmont to Joseph, July 25, 1812. Ibid. 664. Nap. v. 171.

Total defeat of the French left under Thomière.

It was just five o'clock when Pakenham fell on Thomière, who, so far from being prepared for such an onset, had just reached an open hill, the last of the ridge over which he had extended, from whence he expected to see the Allied army in full retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo, and closely pursued by Marmont, defiling in the valley before him. To effect a change of front in such circumstances was impossible; all that could be done was to resist instantly as they

stood. The British columns formed into line as they marched, so that the moment they came in sight of the enemy, they were ready to charge. In an instant the French gunners were at their pieces; and a crowd of light troops hurried to the front, and endeavoured by a rapid fire to cover the formations of the troops behind. Vain attempt! Right onward through the storm of bullets did the British line, led by the heroic Pakenham, advance; the light troops are dispersed before them like chaff before the wind; the half-formed lines are broken into fragments; D'Urban's Portuguese cavalry, supported by Harvey's English dragoons, and Arentschild's incomparable German horse, turned their left flank, scrambled up the steep sides of a bush-fringed stream which flowed behind the ridge, and got into their rear; while their right is already menaced by Leith with the fifth division. Encompassed in this manner with enemies, Thomière's division was forced backward along the ridge; yet not at first in confusion, but skilfully, like gallant veterans, seizing every successive wood and hill which offered the means of arresting the enemy. Gradually, however, the reflux and pressing together of so large a body by enemies at once on front and flank, threw their array into confusion: their cavalry were routed and driven among the foot; Thomière himself was killed, while striving to stem the torrent; the Allie cavalry broke in like a flood into the openings of ıe infantry; and his whole division was thrown back, utterly routed, on Clausel's, which was hurrying up to its aid from the forest, with the loss of three thousand prisoners.[1]

[1] Nap. v 170, 171. Wellington to Lord Bathurst. July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 303. Jones, ii. 137. Belm. i. 233. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 47, 48. Beamish, ii. 74, 75.

Nearly at the same time that this splendid success was gained on the extreme British right, Cole and Leith, with their respective divisions, moved forward

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

at a rapid pace against that part of the enemy's left, composed of Clausel's division, which was hastily formed to oppose them, flanked by Le Marchant's heavy dragoons and Anson's light cavalry, all led by Sir Stapleton Cotton. While warmly engaged with the infantry, who were gaining ground on them, in front, a cloud of dust suddenly filled an opening in the line between them and Pakenham; a loud trampling was heard, and out of it suddenly burst a glittering band of helmets, which at full speed came thundering down on their already shaken and bewildered lines. Hardly any resistance was attempted; whole companies threw down their arms and fled; the long swords of the British dragoons gleamed aloft as they passed shouting through the broken crowd; five guns were taken by Lord Edward Somerset with a single squadron; two thousand prisoners were made in a few minutes, and the whole French left, utterly broken and disordered, was thrown back into the wood in its rear, and in a military point of view annihilated. Great as this success was, it was dearly purchased by the death of the brave Le Marchant, who died in the moment of victory, while carrying the standards of England triumphant through the ranks of France.[1]

Spirited charge of the British cavalry on Clausel's division.

[1] Gurw. ix. 304. Nap. v. 172, 173. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 47. Jones, ii. 108.

Meanwhile, a bloody and more doubtful contest was going on in the centre, where Pack's Portuguese advanced against the French Arapeiles, and the fourth and fifth divisions, headed by Leith and Cole, after clearing the village of Arapeiles, had driven Bonnet's troops backwards step by step, and with hard fighting, upon Clausel's and Thomière's broken remains. As soon as the combatants had passed the village of the French Arapeiles, the rock was assailed; but every where the most vigorous resistance was experienced.

Repulse of the British in the centre, and at the French Arapeiles.

Pack's men gallantly ascended the rugged height; already they were within thirty yards of the summit, driving the enemy's skirmishers before them, when a loud shout arose, and the French masses, hitherto concealed, leapt out from among the rocks on their front and flank, and suddenly closed with their adversaries. The struggle was only of a few moments' duration; a stream of fire, followed by a thick cloud of smoke, burst forth like a burning volcano on the summit of the hill, and immediately the Portuguese were seen flying in disorder, closely followed by the French, to the bottom. This check was attended with still more serious consequences; for the fourth division, which by this time had got abreast of the French Arapeiles, still driving Bonnet's troops before them, was suddenly assailed in flank by three battalions and some horse, who had descended from the hill or stole round its shelter, in all the pride of victory; while at the same time, twelve hundred fresh adversaries, starting upon the reverse side of the slope which they had so painfully won, poured in a volley in front. Notwithstanding all their gallantry, the fourth division was unable to withstand this double attack; the men staggered; Cole and Leith were both wounded: and at length, finding their rear menaced by some of Maucunne's battalions, now disengaged by the repulse at the Arapeiles, they broke and fled in disorder down the ascent.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 304. Nap. v. 174, 175. Kausler, 864, 865.

These important advantages in the centre were immediately followed up with uncommon vigour by the French generals. Bonnet was wounded; but Clausel took the command, and, by his able dispositions, had wellnigh restored the battle. Ferey's troops assailed vigorously the front of the fourth

Wellington and Beresford restore the battle in the centre.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

division, and pursued them into the hollow behind; Brennier did the same to the fifth, and that gallant body being uncovered on the left, where the fourth division had stood, was overlapped and lost ground; while a body of cavalry, which had been concealed behind the Arapeiles, issued forth and fiercely assailed even Clinton's reserve division in the centre in flank. The crisis of the battle had arrived: every thing depended on the immediate bringing up of reserves to the centre, where the decisive blows were to be struck. Beresford, who happened to be at hand, was the first who arrested the disorder: with great presence of mind he brought up a brigade of the fifth division, and caused it to change its formation and face outwards, so as to show a front to the troops of the enemy, who had issued from the hollows behind the Arapeiles. This movement checked the incursion in that quarter, and Beresford had the satisfaction of perceiving the danger abated before he received a wound which compelled him to leave the field. Meanwhile Wellington, who, throughout the whole day, was to be seen in every part of the action where danger required his presence, hastened to the spot, and immediately ordered up Clinton's division from the rear, and their charge upon the enemy, already somewhat disordered by success, proved entirely successful. Halse's brigade, which formed the left of that division, and consequently was most exposed, were swept away by hundreds: they never for an instant, however, flinched, but marching steadily forward with the 11th and 61st regiments in the van, regained all the ground which had been lost—an impetuous charge of the French dragoons only for an instant arrested the 53d;—the southern ridge, which had been lost, was regained;

Ferey was mortally, Clausel slightly wounded; over the whole centre the steady courage of the Allies prevailed; and "the Allied host, righting itself like a gallant ship after a sudden gust, again bore onwards in blood and gloom; for though the air, purified by the storm of the evening before, was peculiarly clear, one vast cloud of smoke and dust rolled along the basin, and within it was the battle, with all its sights and sounds of terror."[1]

[1] Nap. v. 175, 177. Gurw. ix. 304, 305. Jones, ii. 107, 108. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 47, 48. Kausler, 864, 865.

Last stand and final defeat of the French.

Notwithstanding the failure of his efforts to change the fate of the day in the centre, Clausel skilfully bore up against the torrent, and manfully strove to collect such a body of troops as might make head against the victors, and prevent the defeat, now inevitable, from being converted into total ruin. Foy's division, which formed the extreme right of the French, was now coming into action, and the balls from his pieces already fell in the British ranks; the broken remains of the left were blended with the centre, and both retiring together towards the right, soon formed a compact body, which took post on the heights behind the Ariba streamlet, and presented a regular line in front of the forest, to cover the retreat of the reserve parks and artillery, and flight of the fugitives, who were hurrying in disorder through its lanes towards Alba de Tormes. Wellington immediately took measures to drive this strong rearguard from their ground, and complete the victory. The first and light divisions, with part of the fourth, which was re-formed, were directed to turn their right; while Clinton's and Pakenham's divisions, with Hope's and the Spaniards in reserve, assailed their front. The French, who were in hopes the British army had exhausted itself in the affray, were astonished to see a new host rise, as if out of the earth, at its

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

close; but nevertheless they made a gallant defence. Foy's light troops and guns, with admirable skill, took advantage of every knoll and thicket, to arrest the pursuers; and the marshy stream which ran from the wood down to the Tormes, and washed the foot of his last defensible ridge, was obstinately contested. Nevertheless the British, animated by their success, pressed incessantly on; the stream was forced; and Clinton and Pakenham mounted the ridge, on the top of which the French last rear-guard, composed of Maucunne's division, was stationed. Aided by a brigade of the fourth division, these noble troops ascended the steep just as darkness set in: the flames vomited from the artillery on its summit, and the sparkling line of musketry along its crest, guided their steps; the chasms in their ranks showed how severely they suffered from the fire: but when they reached the summit Maucunne's task was fulfilled; the dazzling line of light disappeared, the forest had engulfed the foe, and the victors stood alone on the sable hill.

1 Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 304, 305. Vict. et Conq xxi. 47, 48. Nap. v, 177, 179. Jones ii. 108, 109. Kausler, 865.

Wellington pursues in the wrong direction.

While the last flames of this terrible conflagration were thus expiring on the ridge of Ariba, Wellington, marching in person with the leading regiment of the light division, was making direct across the fields for Huerta and the fords of the Tormes, by which the enemy had passed on their advance, in the hope that the fugitives would make for the same passage, as the castle of Alba de Tormes, which commanded the only way of getting across the river, was still in the hands of the Spaniards in the morning, and the French were in no plight to have forced the passage. That fort, however, now become of vital importance to the beaten army, had been evacuated during the day by the Spanish colonel who held it,

and his commander, Don Carlos d'Espana, had not even informed Wellington of the fact. Thus the pursuit of the light division was turned to the wrong quarter; and the French, who were well aware that the passage in their rear was open, all took that direction and reached Alba de Tormes without further molestation. This circumstance, joined to the darkness setting in just as their last rearguard was driven from its ground, alone saved the French army from total destruction; for if either daylight had lasted two hours longer, or Alba de Tormes had been held by the Spaniards, two-thirds of their number and their whole artillery must, from Wellington having reached the fords first, have been captured.[1]

Nap. v. 179, 181. Gurw. ix. 305. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 48. Marmont to Joseph, July 24, 1812. Belm. i. No. 103 and 104, Appendix, p. 666.

The battle of Salamanca, however, such as it was, undoubtedly was one of the greatest blows struck by any nation during the whole revolutionary war. The loss on the part of the Allies was 5200 men, of whom 3176 were British, 2018 Portuguese, and only 8 Spanish, a fair index probably to the proportions in which the weight of the contest had fallen on the three nations. The French loss has never been divulged; but if the victors lost above five thousand in killed and wounded, it may be presumed that the vanquished in so decisive an overthrow would have to lament at least seven thousand fallen or disabled in the fight; and in addition to this, the victors took 134 officers and 7000 private soldiers prisoners, besides two eagles, six standards, and eleven cannon, wrested from them in fair fight. The French loss, therefore, may fairly be taken at fourteen thousand men. But this result does not rest on approximation or conjecture; for there exists decisive evidence, on the best of all authorities, that of General Clausel himself, that three weeks after the battle he could

Results of the battle.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

only collect twenty-two thousand men on the Douro to make head against the English army,* although it was proved by intercepted returns immediately before it, that Marmont's strength had been forty-four thousand actually with the eagles, independent of six thousand two hundred in the Asturias, and the garrison lost in the forts.† The French, therefore, during the action and retreat, must have been weakened to the extent of twenty-two thousand, or half their army; a result which, how great soever, is easily accounted for, if the magnitude of the defeat, and subsequent losses, and the absolute necessity to which the French soldiers were reduced of straggling in quest of subsistence, from no magazine being provided by their generals, is taken into consideration.

* "I have reached the Douro with the whole army. The difficulty of finding subsistence for the troops is almost insurmountable; all the inhabitants have taken to flight, and the numerous bands of guerillas remove such as would remain by force. Thus the cultivator, if he escapes assassination from our soldiers, is sure to be punished, imprisoned, or carried off by the guerillas, if he remains in the neighbourhood of the French army. The consequence is, that the army is obliged to seek its provisions in presence of the enemy, and it is always in want of every thing. Our position in the middle of Castile is exactly what it was in Portugal, which was the cause of our ruin. I have taken the most vigorous measures to arrest the disorders; more than fifty soldiers have been seized by the provost-marshal and executed; the officers see that they will be punished also if they do not arrest the disorders they have tolerated, which have produced an abominable spirit in the army. *The army consists of twenty thousand infantry, eighteen hundred horse, and fifty guns.* I hope that four thousand or five thousand marauders, who have followed the convoys to Burgos and Vittoria, murdering and pillaging the whole way, will yet rejoin their colours."—CLAUSEL to DUKE DE FELTRE, Minister-at-War, *Valladolid, 18th August* 1812, BELMAS, i. 673.

† "From the enclosed intercepted returns, the army of Portugal consisted on the 1st April, of 65,597 men, of whom 51,492 are effective, fit for duty; of these 48,396 are infantry, 3204 cavalry, and 3393 artillery. There are besides 1500 infantry and 1000 horse at Salamanca; which, deducting 6200 under Bonnet in the Asturias, will leave 43,800 infantry and 4000 cavalry in the field, with 98 guns."—WELLINGTON to SIR J. GRAHAM, *14th June* 1812, GURWOOD, ix. 238.

1812.

On the French side, Generals Ferey, Thomière, and Des Graviers were killed, and Marshal Marmont, and Generals Bonnet, Clausel, and Monnet wounded. The Allies had to lament the loss of General Le Marchant killed, and Generals Beresford, Stapleton Cotton, Leith, Cole, and Alten wounded. Wellington himself was struck by a spent ball on the thigh; but, like Napoleon and Julius Cæsar, he bore a charmed life, and it did him no injury.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 305, 309. Jones, ii. 109. Kausler, 865. Nap. 180. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 48.

With admirable diligence Clausel got his whole army across the river at Alba de Tormes, during the night; and with such expedition was the retreat conducted, that, although Wellington was in motion next morning by daylight, and moved straight in that direction, it was not till noon that they came up with the rearguard, who were posted near La Serna. Such was the depression which prevailed among the French cavalry, that they gave way on the first appearance of the Allied horse, and left the infantry to their fate. The foot soldiers, however, stood firm, and formed with great readiness three squares on the slope of the hill which they were ascending, to resist the squadrons which soon came thundering upon them. The charge was made by Bock's German, and Anson's brigade of English dragoons; and is remarkable as being one of the few instances in the whole revolutionary war, in which, on a fair field and without being previously shaken by cannon, infantry in square were broken by cavalry. The German horse first charged, on two faces, the nearest square, which was lowest down the hill. The French soldiers stood firm, and the front rank, kneeling, received the gallant horsemen with the rolling fire of the Pyramids; but a cloud of dust, which preceded the horses, obscured their aim: a

Brilliant charge of the German dragoons on the French rearguard. July 23.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

single horse, which dashed forward and fell upon the bayonets, formed an opening: at the entrance thus accidentally made, the furious dragoons rushed, and in a few seconds the whole square were sabred or made prisoners. Encouraged by this success, Bock's men next charged the second square, which also received them with a rolling fire; but their courage was shaken by the fearful catastrophe they had just witnessed; a few of them broke from their ranks and fled; and the whole now wavering, the horsemen dashed in, and the greater part of the battalion was cut down or taken. Not content with these triumphs, the unwearied Germans prepared to charge the third square, to which the fugitives from the two others had now fled, and which was at the top of the hill, supported by some horse who had come up to their assistance. The French cavalry were speedily dispersed, and the square, in like manner, broken by an impetuous charge of this irresistible cavalry. In this glorious combat, the Germans had above one hundred men killed and wounded; but nearly the whole of the enemy's infantry, consisting of three battalions, were cut down or made captives. The prisoners taken were above twelve hundred. This action deserves to be noticed in a particular manner, as having been, on the enemy's own admission, the most brilliant cavalry affair which occurred during the war.[1] *

[1] Beamish, ii. 83, 85. Gurw. ix. 305. Jones, ii. 110. Beim. i. 234. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 52, 53. Nap. v. 182, 183.

* "The boldest charge during the war was made the day after the battle of Salamanca, by the Hanoverian general Bock, at the head of the heavy brigade of the King's German Legion."—Foy's *Guerre de la Peninsule*, i. 290. Colonel Napier, who is not favourable to cavalry as an arm in war, hardly seems to do justice to his brave comrades, the Germans, in this action, though he admits their uncommon gallantry.—*Compare* Napier, v. 184; *and* Beamish's *King's German Legion*, ii. 83, 85.—Napier says, merely, that the dragoons "surmounted the difficulties of the ground, and went clean through the square: then the

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

After this defeat of their rearguard, the French army fell into great confusion; and there being no supplies whatever for the troops, great numbers dispersed in every direction in quest of subsistence. But with such extraordinary celerity was this retreat conducted, that Clausel's headquarters were at Flores de Avila, no less than *forty miles* from the field of battle, on the first night,—a prodigious stretch, in little more than twelve hours, for any army, but especially one which, on the preceding day, had undergone the fatigues of a desperate battle. By this forced march, however, the French general both got beyond the reach of further molestation from his pursuers, and got up to Caffarelli's artillery, and horsemen, fifteen hundred strong, who joined from the army of the north, and took the place of the discomfited and wearied rearguard. Still continuing their retreat with rapid strides, they crossed the Douro, and never stopped till they got to Valladolid. Wellington continued the pursuit beyond that river to the same place, where he took seventeen cannon, and eight hundred sick; but[1] seeing no prospect of making up with the enemy, who were retiring towards Burgos, and aware that they were disabled, for a considerable time, from undertaking any active operation, having been reduced to half their numbers, he desisted from the pursuit, recrossed the Douro, and moved against the army of the centre and Madrid, leaving Clinton,[1] with his di-

Rapid retreat of the French to Valladolid.

July 24.

July 29.

July 30.

[1] Nap. v. 185, 186. Jones, ii. 111. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Aug. 4, 1812. Gurw. ix. 330, 331. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 52, 53. Aug. 6.

squares above retreated, and several hundred prisoners were made by these able and daring horsemen."—V. 183. This is hardly the due account of a charge which Wellington says "was one of the most gallant he ever witnessed, and the whole body of the enemy's infantry, consisting of three battalions, were made prisoners," (GURWOOD, ix. 305)—which JONES says took 900 prisoners, (ii. 110)—which BELMAS admits destroyed 900 men, (i. 234)—and which BEAMISH, in the *Annals of the King's German Legion*, asserts took nearly 1400 prisoners, (ii. 85.)

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

vision and Anson's horse, and the Galicians, under Santocildes, to make head against the army of the north in his absence.*

Retreat of Joseph towards Madrid, and action at Majalahonda.

Joseph was at Blasso Sancho, on the 25th, when he received the stunning intelligence of the defeat, and was made aware by Clausel that he was unable to keep the field to the south of the Douro, and must immediately cross that river, in order to preserve his depots at Valladolid and Burgos. By a rapid movement upon Arevalo, he could still have effected a junction with the army of Portugal; but he wisely declined to link his fortunes with those of a beaten and dejected host, and retraced his steps towards Madrid, in order to preserve his communication with the unbroken forces under Soult in Andalusia, and Suchet in Valencia. Unwilling, however, as long as he could avoid it, to repass the Guadarama, he moved first to Segovia, from whence he sent positive orders to Soult to evacuate Andalusia, and join him on the frontiers of La Mancha; and at the same time transmitted to the minister of war at Paris the most bitter complaints against all his marshals, whose jealousies and separate interests rendered them, he affirmed, insensible to the public good, and doomed him to be the impotent spectator of the Emperor's and his kingdom's ruin.† He was soon obliged, however,

* At Olmedo, where the British entered on the 27th, the brave French general Ferey died of his wounds. The Spaniards had forced the body from the grave before the English soldiers came up; but when the light division arrived, the men rescued the remains of their gallant antagonist in arms from their infuriated enemies, re-made the grave, and heaped rocks upon it for additional security. Recalled to their better feelings by this generous action, the Spaniards applauded the deed.—*See* NAP. v. 185-6.

† "The few troops at my command, in the army of the centre, are assembled in the environs of Madrid. The whole provinces of the centre are evacuated, and even the important positions of Somo Sierra and Buy-

by the approach of the British, to abandon Segovia, and retreat across the Guadarama, where he was speedily followed by the Allies, who on the 11th crossed the ridge, and occupied the Escurial. Joseph, with two thousand horse, was at Naval Carnero, to watch and retard the movements of the British; and a reconnoissance, made by him in the evening, brought on a shock at Majalahonda, with the Portuguese cavalry, under General D'Urban, which formed the advanced guard of the Allies. These squadrons, though they had behaved with great gallantry at the battle of Salamanca, were on this occasion seized with an unaccountable panic, and turned about before they reached the enemy, overthrowing in their flight three guns of horse-artillery, which, in consequence, fell into the hands of the French cavalry. The German horse, however, who were immediately brought up to repair the disorder, behaved with their accustomed gallantry, and checked the pursuers, though not without a considerable loss to themselves, which in all amounted to three hundred men. The French again retired, after burning the gun-carriages they had taken;[1] and on the same even-

Aug. 11.

[1] Joseph to Soult, July 29, 1812. Belm. i. 672. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Aug. 13, 1812. Gurw. ix. 349. Jones, ii. 112. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 53, 54.

trago. I should not have been reduced to these painful extremities, if the general-in-chief of the army of the north had obeyed the instructions I have so often given him, to succour, at all hazards, the army of Portugal, and abandon for the moment all lesser points, as I have just done. I repeat it, M. Duke, if the Emperor cannot discover means to make the generals of the north, of Aragon, and of the south obey me, Spain is lost, and with it the French army. I have always told you, and I now repeat it, because affairs are daily becoming more urgent, that the generals who attend only to their own provinces, and not to the general result of the operations, ought to be dismissed as an example to their successors, who should be instructed, in the first instance, to obey me; and that I should no longer be condemned, as heretofore, to be the impotent spectator of the dishonour of our arms, and the loss of the country."—JOSEPH *to* DUKE DE FELTRE, *Minister-at-War*, *July* 18, 1812. BELMAS, i. 662, 663, App.

CHAP. LXIII.

ing the Allied advanced posts were pushed to the neighbourhood of Madrid.[1]

1812.

Great agitation in Madrid at the approach of the English army.

Great was the consternation which prevailed in that capital at the near approach of the English army. Rumour, with its hundred tongues, had even exaggerated the disasters of the French troops; faction was abashed at the awful presence of patriotic triumph; selfish ambition sunk into the earth at the prospect of the immediate overthrow of its golden dreams. Straitened as the court of Joseph had been for a long period, there were yet a multitude of persons who were implicated in its fortunes, and beheld with alarm the prospect of its overthrow. The monarch had collected round the seat of government a great number of idle retainers, and all that multitude of dependants, numerous in every country, but especially so in one so full of proud hidalgos as Spain, who are destitute of all public principle, and ready to accept the wages of servitude from any master who possesses the reins of power. The long continuance also of the war, and continued occupation of the capital by the French armies, had inspired a great number of persons of good feelings, but no extraordinary firmness, with the belief that the French power was irresistible, and they had, in consequence, become involved, more or less, with the Napoleon dynasty. All these individuals felt themselves at once exposed to the overthrow of their fortunes, and possibly the last extremities of popular vengeance; and therefore they began in excessive alarm to prepare for their departure as soon as the English advanced posts were seen on the southern side of the Guadarama range. On the other hand, the working-classes, who had suffered extremely from the long occupation of the capital by the enemy, the

continued suspension of commerce, the absence of the landed proprietors, and the exorbitant taxes by which Joseph, in the little circle around the metropolis, which alone was really subject to his authority, had endeavoured to realize a scanty revenue for the support of his court,* were extravagant in their joy at their approaching deliverance; and even the presence of the French troops could hardly prevent them from giving vent to it in every imaginable demonstration. Then, as is usually the case on the eve of a great civil convulsion, the people were variously affected by hope or terror, according as their interests were likely to be affected by the approaching change; but none viewed it with indifference; every heart was agitated, and few eyelids were closed in Madrid the night before the British entered the city.[1]

[1] Tor. v. 77. South. vi. 48, 49. Jones, ii. 113.

The population of the capital had been reduced, by the French occupation and devastation of the country, to a third of its former amount; but the people in the surrounding districts were highly excited when they heard that Joseph and his court were retiring; and when the long and mournful trains set out, on the evening of the 11th, for Toledo, crowds from all quarters hastened to Madrid to witness the entrance of their deliverers on the following morning. Long before the British soldiers were seen on the Guadarama road, every balcony, every window, every

Entrance of the British into Madrid, and enthusiastic joy of the inhabitants. Aug. 12.

* The taxes had become most oppressive. All the old imposts, though nominally repealed, were in fact collected as rigidly as before, and, in addition to them, a multitude of new duties on corn, oil, meat, and vegetables. Forced loans had repeatedly been exacted from the wealthier classes; and a tax, first of eight, then ten, then fifteen per cent had been imposed on all houses. Employment there was none. The hospitals were crowded with sick and starving poor; and of the persons who had died in the first six months of 1812, two-thirds had perished of actual want.—SOUTHEY, vi. 48, 49.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

door was crowded with eager multitudes: joy beamed on every countenance; and the general exultation had led the people to array themselves in the best remaining attire in their possession, so that it could hardly have been imagined to what an extent misery had previously existed. No words can express the enthusiasm which prevailed when the English standards were seen in the distance, and the scarlet uniforms began to be discerned through the crowd. Amidst a countless multitude, wrought up to the very highest pitch of rapturous feeling; amidst tears of gratitude and shouts of triumph; through throngs resounding with exultation and balconies graced by beauty; to the sound of military music and the pomp of military power—the British army made their entrance into the Spanish capital, not as conquerors but as friends, not as oppressors but deliverers. On that day their chief drank deep of "the purest, holiest, draught of power." The crowd came forth to meet him, not with courtly adulation or bought applause, but heartfelt gratitude and deep enthusiasm; for famine had been among them, and the wan cheek and trickling eye of the multitude who thronged round him to kiss his hand, or touch his horse, bespoke the magnitude of the evils from which he had delivered them. Incredible were the efforts made to manifest the universal transports. Garlands of flowers were displayed from every door; festoons of drapery descended from every balcony; men, women, and children came pouring out of every house to welcome their deliverers, eagerly pressing on them fruits and refreshments, and seeking to grasp the hands which had freed their country. In the evening a general illumination gave vent to the universal rapture:[1] all distinctions of rank, sex, and

[1] Tor. v. 77, 78. Jones, ii. 113, 114. South. vi. 51, 52. Nap. v. 194.

profession were forgotten in the festive blaze; and the servitude of four years seemed to be lost in the intoxicating joy of the first moments of emancipation.

But while his troops were indulging in the glorious scene, and officers and men alike were sharing in the festivities provided for them by the gratitude of the citizens, and feeling "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude,"* the anxious mind of their chief was revolving the means of securing the fruits of this important conquest, and maintaining the brilliant but hazardous position which he had won in the centre of Spain. The Retiro was still in the enemy's hands, and garrisoned by seventeen hundred men; but its possession was of the very highest importance, as it contained the greatest arsenal of military stores and artillery which the French possessed in the country; and its loss would entirely disable them, now that the Ciudad Rodrigo train had fallen into the hands of the British, from undertaking the siege of any considerable fortress for a long period of time. Its defences were immediately reconnoitred, and were found to consist of a double set of intrenchments; one so large that an army would have been required for its defence, the other so contracted that the troops, if driven into it, could hardly be expected to withstand a vigorous cannonade. Wellington took his measures accordingly. Preparations were made for assaulting the outer intrenchments, and guns placed in battery to annihilate the enemy when he was shut up in the interior fort. These preparations, rapidly completed, had the desired effect: the commander, knowing the weakness of his post, no sooner saw the assaulting columns formed, than he hastened to make his submission; and the fort was

Siege and capture of the Retiro.

Aug. 13.

* Sir R. Peel.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

surrendered at discretion, with its whole garrison, one hundred and eighty pieces of artillery, twenty thousand stand of arms, and immense magazines of carriages, clothing, and military stores of all kinds. On the same day, Don Carlos D'Espana was appointed governor of Madrid, and the constitution proclaimed with great solemnity in the principal public places, amidst shouting crowds, who fondly persuaded themselves that the Spaniards had now established their freedom, as well as achieved their independence, and that, having gained the privileges, they were at once to evince the intelligence and earn the fame of the citizens of Athens and Lacedæmon.[1]

[1] South. vi. 52, 53. Jones, ii. 113, 114. Tor. v. 78, 79. Gurw. ix. 354, 355. Nap. v. 194, 195.

Meanwhile Joseph, who had retreated on the road to Aranjuez, was reduced to the most grievous state of perplexity. At the head of only twelve thousand soldiers, he was followed by a motley crowd of above twenty thousand persons of both sexes, and all ages and conditions, who were linked to the fortunes of his court, and whose loud lamentations, clamorous importunity, and real destitution, added inexpressibly to the difficulties of his situation. The mournful procession, which extended almost the whole way from Madrid to Aranjuez, resembled rather those lugubrious troops of captives leaving their homes under the stern severity of ancient war, of which classic eloquence has left us such moving portraits, than any of the ordinary events of modern warfare. The line of the soldiers' march was broken in upon by crowds of weeping women and wailing children; courtiers, even of the highest rank, were seen desperately contending with common soldiers for the animals which transported their families; multitudes of persons, bred in affluence and unused to hardship, eagerly sought from casual passengers the necessaries

CHAP. LXIII.

1812.

of life. The unhappy monarch had earnestly besought help from Suchet, and been unsuccessful; he had commanded Soult to send ten thousand men to his aid at Toledo, and met with a positive refusal. Thus destitute alike of friends, consideration, or authority, he was surrounded by a starving crowd of needy dependents: he had literally all the burdens of a crown without either its power, its respect, or its means of beneficence. Such was the miserable condition of this immense array, that the cavalry alone of the Allies would have sufficed to have driven the whole into the Tagus; and the bridge of Aranjuez might have renewed the horrors of the passage of the Loire,* or anticipated those of the Berezina; but Wellington restrained his soldiers, and suffered the crowd to pass over in safety, humanely feeling that the deliverance of the Spanish capital should not be sullied by the massacre of a considerable part of its citizens, and wisely judging that it was not politic to disembarrass a fugitive monarch of a crowd of useless and destitute retainers.[1]

[1] Soult to Joseph, July 16, 1811. Belm. i. 655. Suchet to Joseph, June 30, 1812. Ibid. i. 659. Nap. v. 192, 193.

The French affairs in every part of the Peninsula now exhibited that general crash and ruin which so usually follow a great military disaster, and presage the breaking up of political power. At the same time that the Retiro, with its immense warlike stores, yielded to the arms of Wellington, Guadalaxara, with its garrison of seven hundred men, surrendered to those of the Empecinado, who had so long maintained a guerilla warfare in the mountains in its vicinity: three hundred men had recently before been captured by the partidas near Valladolid; six thousand were shut up and blockaded in Toro, Tordesillas, and Zamora on the Douro;

General breaking up of the French power in Spain.

Aug. 13.

July 30.

* *Ante*, ii. 264.

CHAP. LXIII.

1812. Astorga, long closely besieged, at last surrendered with twelve hundred men; soon after, Torden, with three hundred, capitulated; the castle of Mirabete, near Almarez, had already been blown up; Talavera and the Puerto de Banos were evacuated, and the French troops in the valley of the Tagus withdrawn to the neighbourhood of Aranjuez. Symptoms also of the evacuation of Andalusia at no distant period were already apparent. In the middle of August the castle of Niebla was destroyed, and the whole district of the same name abandoned. All the archives and valuable effects at Seville were packed up, and the defences of the Cartusa convent in its neighbourhood materially strengthened; while an unusual degree of bustle in the lines in front of Cadiz, led to the suspicion that the French were about to retire from their position before that city. No decided movement, however, to that effect took place till the news arrived of the capture of Madrid; but no sooner was it received, than the sudden bursting forth of fierce conflagrations in various parts of their lines, and violent explosions in all directions, announced that the long-beleaguered city was to be delivered. At nine on the following morning the British and Spanish troops made a general sortie, and found the intrenchments deserted, and the work of destruction already far advanced. In a moment the labour of three years had been set at nought: the gigantic intrenchments, constructed at so incredible a cost of time and money, were abandoned; the principal forts were consigned to the flames; while the rapid approach of the besieged, rescued from destruction enormous stores of shot and other warlike implements, which, with five hundred pieces of cannon mounted on the works,[1]

Aug. 19. Aug. 21. Aug. 15. Aug. 25. Aug. 26.

[1] Jones, ii. 115, 116, 119. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 55, 61. Nap. v. 194, 241.

besides an equal number which had been destroyed before the garrison came up, constituted the proud warlike trophies of the battle of Salamanca.

Advantages and dangers of Wellington's position.

The situation of Wellington was now in the highest degree brilliant; and the consequences which had already attended his exertions, both demonstrated the magnitude of the blow which had been struck, and the skill with which the quarter in which it was delivered had been selected. Never was a more just observation than that made by Napoleon at the very outset of the war,* "that the fate of the Peninsula was to be determined in the neighbourhood of Valladolid; for a stroke delivered there would paralyse all Spain." Already from its effects his power had been loosened in every quarter: the valley of the Tagus had been abandoned, that of the Douro conquered; Madrid had fallen into the hands of the Allies; Andalusia was in the course of being abandoned by the French. What was of more importance in a military point of view, the army of the north was now irrevocably separated from that of the centre: the former, not above twenty thousand strong, was thrown back, routed and discouraged, into the neighbourhood of Burgos; the latter, encumbered with a host of fugitives, was flying in dismay over the plains of La Mancha. But these, certainly great advantages, were counterbalanced by corresponding dangers; and to the eye which, undazzled by present events, looked forward to the future issue of things, there were many causes for anxiety in the prospects of the English general, and not the least those which gave the greatest lustre to his present situation. The power of the French in Spain had been loosened, not destroyed:

* *Ante*, vi. 702.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

one victory, and the capture of two fortresses, could not overthrow the fabric reared by four years of conquest; the abandonment of the remoter provinces by the Imperial generals, would only augment the force which they could concentrate in the heart of the monarchy; and woful experience had sufficiently demonstrated that no reliance was to be placed on Spanish co-operation, and that the liberation even of the richest provinces brought no corresponding accession of strength to the standards of Wellington. Thus, disaster might possibly in reality improve the situation of the French generals; and, by compelling them to concentrate their forces, and loosen their hold of the remoter parts of Spain, be the means of bringing an overwhelming force against Wellington in its centre.

Able views of Soult at this period for the re-establishment of affairs.

Soult, even before matters had arrived at their present critical situation, had long entertained lofty, and yet reasonable views, for the maintenance of the French power in the Peninsula. Though they were founded, as those of all the marshals at that period were, upon the immediate interests of his own province, and proposed an arrangement which was to bring him into the supreme direction of its military affairs, yet it is doubtful whether, by any other combination, an equally formidable force could have been brought against the English general. His plan, founded on the necessity of retaining their hold both of Andalusia and Valencia as the great reservoirs of their resources, and the impossibility of doing so with effect while the centre of Spain was also occupied with insufficient forces, was, that Joseph himself should come to Andalusia with all the troops he could collect, and so reinforce the army of Estremadura to such an extent as might enable

them to resume the offensive in the Alentejo, and fix the seat of war in the Portuguese provinces on the left bank of the Tagus.* Impressed with these ideas, it was with the most poignant regret that this able commander received the formal order from the King, already mentioned, to evacuate Andalusia, and thus lose at once the fruit of three years' labours. "The southern provinces," he observed, "hitherto such a burden, now offer the means of remedying the present disasters. To sacrifice them, for the sake of regaining the capital of Spain, is folly; it is purchasing a town at the price of a kingdom. Philip V. thus lost it, and yet preserved his throne. The battle of Arapeiles was merely a grand duel, which might be fought over again with a different result; but to abandon Andalusia, with all its stores and establishments, to raise the siege of Cadiz, sacrifice the guns, the equipments, the hospitals, and the magazines, and thus render null the labour of three years, would be to make the battle of Arapeiles a prodigious historical event, which would be felt all over Europe, and even in the new world. Collect, then, the army of the centre, the army of Aragon, and, if possible, the army of Portugal, and march

* "I see clearly the dangers of your Majesty's position; but any troops which I could send you would be insufficient to re-establish your affairs, unless the whole army of the south should march, which would occasion the loss of Andalusia, and, by necessary consequence, of Valencia. From one post to another, we should be driven to the Ebro. Now, all that might be avoided. We can by a single word from your Majesty save six thousand sick and wounded, whom I shall be compelled to abandon, preserve two thousand pieces of cannon, the only reserve park that now remains in Spain, and abridge the war by at least six campaigns. I propose that your Majesty should yourself come, with all the troops you can collect, to Andalusia; that will enable us to increase the army in Estremadura to such an extent as will fix the seat of war in the Portuguese provinces to the south of the Tagus."—SOULT *to* JOSEPH, 16*th July* 1812, BELMAS, i. 656.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

upon Andalusia, even if in so doing you should be obliged to evacuate Valencia. By doing this, a hundred and twenty thousand men will be assembled on the southern frontier of Portugal. If the army of Portugal remain on the north, let it do so: it can defend the line of the Ebro; and the moment eighty thousand men are assembled to the south of the Sierra Morena, the theatre of war is changed, and the English general must fall back to save Lisbon."[1]

[1] Soult to Joseph, Aug. 12, 1812. Nap. v. 589, Appendix.

Refusal of Suchet to send any succour to Joseph.

Important and daring as these views for the maintenance of French ascendency in Spain undoubtedly were, they involved a sacrifice of the capital, the central provinces of the monarchy, and the communication with France, to which Joseph could by no means reconcile his mind. Nor, if he had adopted Soult's views, would it have been an easy matter to carry them into execution; for the army of Portugal was totally unable to undertake any such march as that from the Ebro to the Guadalquivir; the army of the centre, with its fearful train of dispossessed and starving courtiers, would be rather a burden than an assistance; and Suchet, with the army of Aragon, so far from being prepared to sacrifice his hard-won conquests in the east of Spain, by following the King's standard into Andalusia, had positively refused to send him any succour, even to prevent his capital from falling into the enemy's hands.* The

* "I am well aware that the most formidable enemies which the Emperor now has in the Peninsula are the English, and see clearly the importance it would be of, if I could send your Majesty a corps of fifteen thousand or twenty thousand men; but when the impossibility of doing so is as clearly demonstrated as it is at this moment, I conceive it is my first duty to make you aware of the advantage of preserving our conquests in Valencia. They offer a point of retreat at once to the army of the centre and that of the south, and preserve the great line of communication with France by the eastern coast. Valencia is the true

plan proposed by Suchet, that the retreat of the army of the centre should be upon Valencia, and that Soult, with that of the south, should be directed to fall back in the same direction, if less brilliant and daring, was more feasible and prudent than that of Soult—that the whole centre of the Peninsula should be evacuated, and the French forces assembled, in two masses, on the Ebro and the Guadalquivir; and it had the great, and in Joseph's estimation, decisive advantage, that it kept open the great lines of retreat and communication with France, both by the routes of Barcelona and Bayonne. Positive orders accordingly were transmitted to Soult to continue and complete the evacuation of Andalusia, and fall back with all his forces towards Valencia. The marshal, much against his will, obeyed these instructions, and the French troops, in every quarter, took the road for Murcia; but such were the feelings of exasperation excited on both sides by these calamities, and this immense abandonment of territory, that mutual and most acrimonious complaints were made on both sides to Napoleon—Joseph accusing Soult of disobedience of orders, and a design to make himself king of Andalusia[1];* and Soult accusing Joseph, to the

Aug. 14.

[1] Soult to the Duke de Feltre, Aug. 12, 1812. Nap. v. 591, and 236, 238.

point of retreat: Wellington will never fight so far from his ships. His only object by his invasion is to reap the harvests of Leon, and induce your Majesty to evacuate Andalusia. My first duty is to act according to the Emperor's instructions of 24th April: any detachment towards Madrid would compromise the fate of the provinces of Catalonia and Valencia. I see, with extreme regret, I have lost your Majesty's confidence, and pray you to give me a successor."—SUCHET *to* JOSEPH, *June* 30, 1812, BELMAS, i. 657, 661.

* "I have yesterday received the letter in cipher which your Majesty wrote to me, from Requena, on the 18th October. At the distance the Emperor is from his capital, there are some things on which we must shut our eyes, at least for the moment. If the conduct of the Duke of Dalmatia is equivocal and doubtful—if his proceedings even have the same aspect as those he formerly adopted when in Portugal, after the tak-

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

French war minister, of disloyalty to his brother, and forgetfulness of the Emperor's interests in the separate concerns of his own dominions.

When Wellington first moved into the plains of Leon, Hill received orders to remain on the defensive in Estremadura, and not fight with his opponent unless an opportunity should occur of doing so obviously to advantage. At this period it was Drouet's interest to have urged on a battle, as a serious loss in the south, even if consequent on a victory, might have compelled Wellington to detach, or even arrest his career of success in the north. He advanced accordingly with twenty-four thousand men to Santa Martha, with the intention of attacking Hill's corps; but the position at Albuera, now considerably strengthened by field-works, which the English general had assumed, was so formidable that he was deterred from the attempt, and retreated towards the Sierra Morena on the very day of the battle of Salamanca. A variety of affairs of outposts afterwards ensued between the two armies, in one of which Slade's brigade of horse gained a brilliant advantage over the French cavalry. Nothing of importance, however, ensued between the two armies till the battle of Salamanca had imposed on Soult the necessity of withdrawing his troops altogether from Estrema-

July 24.

ing of Oporto—the time will come when the Emperor may punish him, if he deems it expedient: and, perhaps, he is less dangerous where he is than here, where a few factious persons, from the depth of the prisons even where they were confined, meditated, and all but executed, a revolution against the Emperor's authority, on the 2d and 3d October, (Mallet's conspiracy.) I think, then, sire, it is most prudent not to drive the Duke of Dalmatia to extremities; taking care nevertheless, underhand, to thwart all his ambitious projects; and using every imaginable precaution to secure the fidelity of the army of the south towards the Emperor, and also that of the Spaniards in his suite."—*Confidential Letter, the* DUKE DE FELTRE, *Minister-at-War, to* KING JOSEPH; *Paris, 10th Nov.* 812. NAP. v. 595, App.

dura, preparatory to the general evacuation of the southern provinces; and then Hill followed Drouet, on his retreat to the Sierra Morena, till he received orders from Wellington to advance up the Jarama towards Madrid, to cover the city on the southern side, while he himself, with the bulk of his forces, proceeded northward to the siege of Burgos.[1] CHAP. LXIII. 1812. [1] Jones, ii. 115, 125. Gurw. ix. 332, 333.

Wellington moves to the north against Clausel.

Wellington was not long, after he arrived at Madrid, of perceiving that the north was the quarter in which matters had become most urgent, and that it was there that the struggle for the maintenance of his position in the Peninsula was to be undergone. The expected co-operation on the east coast of Spain had, as already mentioned, entirely failed; Clausel had been considerably reinforced in the north; and Madrid had been very far indeed from realizing the sanguine expectations which had been formed as to the extent to which it might provide means for the campaign. A loan of £480,000 had indeed been asked from the city, and nominally agreed to; but such had been the exhaustion of its resources by the long previous impoverishment and exaction of the French troops, that it produced very little. The regency at Cadiz could not be prevailed on to contribute any thing even for the subsistence of the troops; the military chest, so far as specie was concerned, was absolutely penniless; the war with America had, at the most critical period of the contest, closed the principal source from whence grain had hitherto been obtained for the army; and supplies could be procured only by purchasing corn for hard cash, and at a heavy expense, in Lisbon. The citizens had liberally fed the troops in garrison, and the stewards of the sequestered and royal lands had zealously given the produce of their harvest on the

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

promise of future payment; but no steps whatever had been taken to augment the military strength of the country, or turn the enthusiasm of the people to any useful account: the guerillas were quietly settling down in the large towns, and striving to console themselves for their privations by the plunder they could collect; while the people of the capital, deeming the war at an end, were giving themselves up to feasts and bull-fights, without any thought of the serious concerns of their situation. Thus the whole weight of the contest, as usual, was likely to fall on Wellington and his English troops; and as the north was the vital point of the campaign, and the considerable reinforcements which were coming from England had been directed to Corunna to join him on the Douro, he resolved without delay to direct a considerable part of his forces there, and proceed in person to endeavour to gain a base for the future operations of the war in the northern provinces.* Leaving, therefore, the two divisions of the Allied army which stood most in need of repose at Madrid, he himself set out on the 1st September for Valladolid with four divisions. Hill was ordered to Aranjuez to assist in covering the capital; the British and Portuguese from Cadiz were ordered round by sea to Lisbon, with instructions to move up as

Sept. 1. rapidly as possible to the scene of action; the guards

* Such was the misery to which the poorer classes of Madrid had been reduced by the long-continued exactions of the French troops and authorities, that when the British arrived, so far from being in a condition to give them any support, they needed relief from them. Groans of famishing persons were, in the poorer quarters of the city, heard every night; while, in the morning, the numerous dead bodies thrown into the streets showed how intense the suffering had been; and the British officers of the third division and 45th regiment formed by contributions a soup-kitchen, which rescued hundreds from an untimely death.—*See* NAPIER, v. 257, 258.

and reinforcements from England were directed to land at Corunna, and thence cross Galicia with all possible expedition; and every effort made to bring together as great a disposable force as could be collected in the anticipated seat of war to the north of the Douro.[1]

[1] Wellington to Sir H. Wellesley, Aug. 23, 1812. Gurw. ix. 369, 371. Jones, ii. 122, 123. Nap. v. 258, 261. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 55.

The march from Madrid was conducted with great expedition. Leaving that capital on the 1st September, the English general passed the Douro on the 6th, at the fords of El Herrera, and on the 7th drove the enemy from Valladolid; and following them closely, effected a junction with the army of Galicia under Santocildes at Palencia. It was there seen how miserably fallacious had been the representations which had been held forth as to the support which might be anticipated from this portion of the Spanish troops. Instead of thirty thousand men who received rations as soldiers in Galicia, there only joined the army twelve thousand men, ill-disciplined, and almost in rags, of whom no more than three hundred and fifty were horse. It was quite evident, the moment they made their appearance, that no reliance could be placed on them to withstand the shock of a single division of French troops. If, however, the appearance of the Spanish force was in the highest degree discouraging, that of the French troops was in a proportional degree satisfactory; and evinced, in the clearest manner, the vast chasm which the battle of Salamanca had made in their ranks. As Clausel retired, he broke down all the bridges over the numerous streams which, in that mountainous region, flow towards the Douro or the Ebro, the repairing of which sensibly retarded the advance of the British; but when he drew near to Burgos, and took up a position covering that

French retire to Burgos. Sept. 8.

Sept. 17.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

town, which compelled the Allies to wait till the bulk of their army came up, it at once appeared how immensely his numbers had diminished from the effects of that memorable engagement. His battalions could be distinctly numbered; and the whole amount of his troops, including cavalry and artillery, did not exceed twenty-two thousand,* a sad contrast to the noble army of forty-five thousand who had so lately crowded the banks of the Guarena. With this force he did not conceive himself sufficiently strong to fight; and therefore abandoning Burgos to its fate, he retired to Briviesca; on its northern side, where he was next day joined by General Souham with nine thousand infantry of the army of the north, which increased his force, even after deducting two thousand left in garrison in the castle of Burgos, to fully thirty thousand men.[1]

[1] Belm. i. 238, 239. Jones, ii. 124, 125. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 64, 65. Gurw. ix. 419. Nap. v. 259, 261.

Description of the castle of Burgos, and the French works there.

The castle of BURGOS, which has acquired, from the consequences of the siege that followed, an historic character that would not otherwise have belonged to it, occupies the upper parts of an oblong conical hill, the lower half of which is surrounded by an uncovered wall of difficult access, while on its summit stands an old square keep, converted by the French into a modern casemated fort. Between these defences, which they found there when they commenced their operations, the French engineers had constructed two lines of field-works, well built and strongly palisaded, which enclosed the two summits of the hill, on the highest of which the old keep, surrounded by a strong battery, stood, while the lower was crowned by an ancient building called

* "Clausel had collected twenty thousand infantry, two thousand horse, and fifty guns, with which he had re-occupied Valladolid previous to Wellington's return from Madrid."—BELMAS, i. 238; and CLAUSEL *to* JOSEPH, 18*th August* 1812; *Ibid*, p. 672. *Pièces Just.*

the white church, which also had been converted into a sort of modern fortress. The battery called the Napoleon battery, round the old keep, was so elevated that it commanded the whole country within cannon-shot around, with the exception of a hill called St Michael, which was a lower eminence, on which the French had constructed a hornwork, with a scarp twenty-five, and a counterscarp ten feet high, encircled by strong palisades, and well furnished with heavy cannon, while its position under the fire of the Napoleon battery rendered it peculiarly difficult to hold even if won by assault. Twenty heavy guns and six mortars were already mounted in this fortress; and, independent of its importance as commanding the great road from Bayonne to Madrid, its acquisition was an object of the very highest importance to the Allies, as the whole stores and reserve artillery of the army of Portugal were deposited within its walls; and its reduction, by depriving that force of its resources, would probably enable the English general to take up his winter quarters, and fix the seat of war, on the banks of the Ebro.[1]

[1] Jones, ii. 125, 126. Belm. iv. Nap. v. 262, 263. Wellington to Sir E. Paget, Sept. 20, 1812. Gurw. ix. 432 and 436. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 65, 66.

The first effort of the English general was directed against the hornwork of St Michael, the possession of which was indispensably necessary to approaches against the body of the place. Such, however, was the vigour with which the French batteries, which commanded all the fords and bridges over the Arlanza stream, which required to be passed before it could be reached, were served, that it was not till the 19th that the passage was effected, and the outposts on the hill of St Michael driven in. An assault was immediately ordered for the same night, and conducted by Major Somers Cocks, with the light

Storming of the hornwork of St Michael. Sept. 19.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

infantry of the first division, Pack's Portuguese, and the 42d British regiment. As soon as it was dark, the troops moved to the assault; and as the works, though formidable, were not yet entirely finished, they succeeded in forcing their way, headed by the 79th, in by the gorge, at daylight the next morning, although the attempt to carry the work itself failed, from the great height of the scarp. The garrison, which consisted of a strong battalion, made a stout resistance; and, when they found the entrance in the enemy's possession, collecting themselves into a solid mass, they overpowered all opposition, burst through the assailants, and regained the castle, with the loss only of a hundred and fifty men, while that of the assailants was above four hundred.[1]

[1] Vict. et Conq. xxi. 65, 66. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Sept. 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 437. Jones, ii. 126, 127. Nap. v. 264.

Repeated unsuccessful assaults.

Batteries were now erected against the exterior line of defences, and Wellington had an opportunity of observing in person the strength of the place. Although the lines were far from being complete, and such as would easily have yielded to a very small battering train; yet such was the almost total destitution of the British army in heavy artillery, that Wellington, from the very first, expressed the most serious apprehensions that he would not be able to breach its ramparts, and that his only chances of success consisted in the failure of the garrison's water, or in their magazines being set on fire.* The attempt, however, was made: twelve thousand men, comprehending the first and sixth divisions, with two Portu-

Sept. 28.

* "I am apprehensive that the means which I have are not sufficient to enable me to take the castle. I hear the enemy, however, are ill supplied with water, and that their magazines are in a place exposed to be set on fire: I think it possible, therefore, that I may have it in my power to force them to surrender, although I may not be able to lay the place open to assault."—WELLINGTON *to* LORD BATHURST, 21*st Sept.* 1812, GURWOOD, ix. 436.

guese brigades, were intrusted with the siege; while twenty thousand, supported by ten thousand Spaniards, formed the covering force. Approaches in form were accordingly commenced; although the miserable battering train, which consisted only of three eighteen pounders and the five iron twenty-four pound howitzers which had been used at the siege of the forts of Salamanca, gave but little hopes of a successful issue to the enterprise. An attempt was made, after the breaching guns had played a few days, to carry the outer wall by assault; but although the troops got into the ditch, and the ladders were fixed against the scarp of the rampart, yet the few who reached its summit were immediately bayoneted, and, after a bloody conflict of half an hour, the assailants fell back, after having lost three hundred and fifty men.

Sept. 22. [1] Belm. iv. 278, 279. Jones, ii. 126. Nap. ii. 266, 267. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 66, 67. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Sept. 2, 1812. Gurw. ix. 450.

All the attempts to breach the wall of this outer intrenchment by means of the heavy guns having failed, and two out of the three having been silenced by the superior weight of the enemy's fire, an attempt was made to run a mine in such a manner as to blow it down; while the single gun which remained in a serviceable condition continued its ineffectual fire upon the rampart. The gun could do nothing: but the mine, which was exploded on the night of the 29th, made a chasm in the wall, though not sufficiently wide as to be deemed practicable by the assaulting columns, though a sergeant and four men, who formed the forlorn hope, had gained its summit; and before the next morning the garrison had, with surprising activity, run up such interior defences as rendered all entrance impossible. Recourse was now had to a second mine: a new gallery was run under the wall, and, at four in the afternoon of the 4th

Storming of the outer lines.

Oct. 29.

Oct. 4.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

October, it was sprung with a terrific explosion, which at once sent many of the French up into the air, and brought down above one hundred feet of the wall. An assault was instantly ordered, both there and at the old breach, and both proved successful. Holmes, with the 2d battalion of the 24th, quickly forced his way through the smoke and crumbling ruins, almost before the rattle of the explosion had ceased; while Lieutenant Fraser of the same regiment, at the same moment carried the old breach: and both uniting, drove the enemy into their interior line. This important achievement greatly elevated the spirits of the army, which had sunk considerably from the long duration and serious loss of life during the siege; and the speedy reduction of the castle was anticipated, the more especially as some supplies of ammunition had already been received from Santander, and more was known to be on the road, both from Ciudad Rodrigo and Corunna.[1]

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Oct. 5, 1812. Gurw. ix. 468. Jones, ii. 127. Nap. v. 273, 274. Belm. iv. 281, 284. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 67, 68.

But these promising appearances were of short continuance, and soon gave way to such a succession of disasters, as not only almost shut out all hope of a successful issue to the siege, but so seriously depressed the spirit of the army, as went far to counterbalance all the advantages of the campaign. Dubreton and his brave garrison, who throughout the whole siege discharged with incomparable vigour and talent the important duty intrusted to them, made the most strenuous efforts to dispossess the besiegers of the vantage-ground they had gained; and, in the first instance at least, with unlooked-for success. A sally, suddenly directed, on the afternoon of the next day, against the advanced posts of the British within the outer wall, swept them all back and regained both breaches; and though the garrison was driven in again

Successful sallies of the garrison.

Oct. 5.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

the same evening, yet they had in the mean time destroyed this lodgment, and carried off the tools. The two following days were employed by both parties in indefatigable efforts: the Allies increasing the front of their lodgment, and pushing their sap up to the second line; the French, by frequent sorties and an incessant fire, as well as by rolling of shells down the hill, striving to retard them. On the evening of the 8th, however, the head of the sap had, by strenuous exertions, been run to within ten yards of the wall; and Dubreton, seeing an assault of that line imminent, ordered a sally in the night, which succeeded so far, that by a desperate rush the trench was gained, and before the enemy could be driven in again, which was effected with the utmost gallantry by Major Cocks, who fell dead in the moment of success, the whole works, constructed with so much labour between the outer and inner line, were destroyed.[1]

Oct. 7 and 8.

[1] Jones, ii. 128. Gurw. ix. 478. Nap. v. 274, 275. Belm. iv. 286, 290. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 68, 69.

It was now evident that to push the sap on so narrow a front, without the aid of artillery, was hopeless; and every effort was therefore made to increase the fire on the inner line. The arrival of ammunition from Santander enabled the engineers to do this. The one remaining gun was worked incessantly; and the five iron howitzers did such good service, that it was evident that if an adequate supply of ammunition could be obtained, the place would speedily fall. But the failure of that indispensable article again suspended the operations, and it was not till the 15th that the fire in the breaching batteries could be renewed. It was then directed against the inner circle of the Napoleon battery, while a mine, charged with nine hundred pounds of powder, was run under the white church. This done, and the howitzers having cleared away the

The second line is carried, but retaken.

Oct. 15.

Oct. 17.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

temporary obstructions run up in the breach of the second line; a final assault was ordered for the night of the 18th. At half-past four in the morning, the signal was given by the springing of the mine beneath the white church, which threw down a part of the wall; and Colonel Browne, at the head of a Portuguese battalion and some Spanish companies, after a violent struggle, established themselves in its ruins. At the same time, a detachment of the King's German Legion carried the breach of the second line; the Guards, at another place, got in by escalade; and the intrenchment was won. Some brave men, in the tumult of victory, even rushed on and got to the summit of the breach of the third line, where the bodies of Major Wurmb and a Hanoverian colonel were found. Unfortunately, however, the efforts of these heroes were, in the darkness of the night, not adequately supported: the troops got dispersed in the space between the second and third line; and Dubreton, who had a powerful reserve in readiness to take advantage of such an incident, instantly rushed down with an overpowering force, and drove the assailants out of the lines they had so gallantly won, with the loss of two hundred men.[1]

Oct. 18.

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Oct. 26, 1812. Gurw. ix. 508, 509. Jones, ii. 128, 129. Nap. v. 277, 279. Belm. iv. 291, 295. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 70, 71.

This was the last effort of the besiegers. The siege, which had now continued without intermission for thirty days, had not only occasioned a vast consumption of ammunition to the Allies, which they could ill spare in the exhausted state of their supplies, but it had cost them two thousand brave men killed and wounded, and given the French generals time to assemble forces from all quarters for its relief. Souham's corps at Briviesca had been joined by the whole army of the north, and strong reinforcements from Alava, in consequence of which,

Wellington raises the siege: causes of its failure.

Clausel, whose force was now raised to forty-four thousand men, had assumed an offensive attitude, which had obliged Wellington to unite nearly the whole besieging to the covering army, on the day of the last assault. He had even driven in the British pickets, and obtained possession of Quintana Palla on their left, though from this they were immediately expelled by Sir Edward Paget with two divisions. Accounts, however, were at the same time received from Madrid, which rendered it indispensable for the Allies forthwith to provide for the security of the centre of Spain. Soult, who had without molestation assembled his whole forces in Andalusia, including Drouet's from Estremadura, had marched from Granada in the middle of September, by the way of Caravaca, and effected his junction with the army of the centre, under Joseph, on the 29th of the same month, at Albante. Their united force was sixty thousand strong, without reckoning on any of Suchet's troops. Ballasteros, whose indefatigable activity and energy had hitherto so justly procured for him a high reputation, was so mortified at being directed by the Cortes to act in obedience to the directions of Wellington, that at this critical period he not only hung back, and kept his important force in a state of inactivity, but actually published a proclamation to his troops, appealing to the Spanish pride against the indignity of serving under a foreigner; a proceeding for which the government at Cadiz most justly deprived him of his command, and confined him in the fortress of Ceuta. But, meanwhile, the evil was done, and was irreparable: the whole army of the south had united with that of the centre, and was advancing rapidly against Madrid with sixty thousand men;

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Sept. 15.

Sept. 29.

Sept. 12.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

while the reinforced army of the north, mustering forty-five thousand soldiers, pressed on Wellington on the northern side. Thus, as usual, the whole weight of the contest had fallen upon the British generals, whose united force, after the losses and sickness of the campaign, being little more than half the number of the enemy's armies directed against them, a retreat to a central position became a matter of necessity; and the siege of the castle of Burgos was raised on the night of the 21st, not without severe regret on the part of the English general.[1]

[1] Jones, ii. 130, 131. Nap. v. 288, 291. Gurw. ix. 508, 509. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Oct. 26, 1812. Belm. i. 239, 240, Vict. et Conq. xxi. 70, 73.

Operations of Soult and Hill in the centre of Spain.

Soult's first operations were directed against the castle of Chinchilla, a fort of great strength, situated on a high rock at the point of junction of the roads of Alicante and Valencia, and commanding the only route from the eastern provinces to the capital. It was garrisoned by two hundred and forty men, and, from its inaccessible situation, was wellnigh impregnable. Wellington had calculated upon the siege of this fort retarding the advance of the French from the south a considerable time; and Ballasteros was to have united with the whole guerilla parties from the southern provinces, who would have formed a mass of above twenty thousand combatants, and united to thirty thousand Anglo-Portuguese under Hill at Toledo, might have seriously retarded, if they could not altogether prevent, the march of Soult and Joseph to the capital. But Ballasteros' disobedience of the orders he had received, enabled Soult, without molestation, not only to assemble his forces, but continue his march with such rapidity, that he appeared before this fort on the 3d of October; and the castle being immediately invested, it surrendered on the 6th, in consequence of the singular circumstance of lightning having fallen on the

Oct. 6.

garrison, killing the governor and eight men, and wounding a still greater number; whereupon the remainder, seized with superstitious dread, immediately hoisted the white flag. By this fortunate catastrophe, coupled with the no less auspicious disobedience of Ballasteros, Soult was enabled to bring his whole force, in conjunction with that of Joseph, in all sixty thousand men, to bear against the centre of Spain, where Hill, now reinforced by the troops from Cadiz, with an army not at the utmost exceeding forty thousand, of whom part were Spaniards, was intrusted with the defence of the capital.[1]

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. Oct. 6. [1] Jones, ii. 131, 132. Nap. v. 291, 292. Vict. et Conq. xx. 83, 84. Belm. i. 241. Nap. v. 308, 309.

In these circumstances, it became a matter of necessity to abandon Madrid, and nothing, it was evident, short of a union of the whole British force in the Peninsula, in a central situation on the plains of Leon, could afford them any chance of maintaining their footing in Spain. Wellington then experienced the truth of what he had long before expressed in his correspondence, viz., that the invasion of Andalusia and the siege of Cadiz, by retaining a large portion of the French force in a state of comparative inactivity, so far as resisting the British army was concerned, had been a sensible benefit to the Allied cause; and that the battle of Salamanca, by inverting this order and bringing their masses concentrated together, from the mountains of Asturias to the bay of Cadiz, upon the British host, would, in the first instance at least, prove a disadvantage. He transmitted orders to Hill accordingly to abandon the line of the Tagus, which he had hitherto held, evacuate Madrid, and fall back by the Guadarama pass to the neighbourhood of Salamanca. These orders were immediately obeyed: the preparations for the defence of the line of the Tagus were discontinued;[2] Madrid

The latter evacuates Madrid, and retires towards Salamanca.

Nov. 2. [2] Wellington to Lord Bathurst. Oct. 28, 1812. Gurw. ix. 515, 516. Jones, ii. 132. Belm. i. 241. Nap. v. 310, 314.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. was evacuated, amidst the frequent tears and mournful silence of the inhabitants; a dense mass of men, women, and children, followed the troops for miles bewailing their departure: on the same day Joseph made his entry, and the British army, at first in good order, took the road for the Guadarama pass.[1]

Great difficulties of Wellington's retreat.

Meanwhile, Wellington himself had extraordinary difficulties to encounter in his retreat from Burgos. No small difficulty was experienced at the very outset in getting the troops across the bridge of the Arlanza; for it was commanded by the castle, and the enemy, aware of the intentions of the besiegers, had brought every gun they possibly could to bear on the narrow archway. Such, however, were the precautions taken by the British engineers to prevent the carriages passing from making any noise, as the French had done twelve years before at the siege of the Fort of Bard in the valley of Aosta,* that the whole would have got over in the night in safety, had not some irregular Spanish horse heedlessly galloped past, and, by their ill-timed clatter, attracted the attention of the garrison, who instantly commenced a heavy fire on the bridge, then crowded

Oct. 21. with carriages, which at first was very destructive; but the aim was soon lost as the guns recoiled, and the remaining discharges, which continued through the whole night, did little or no mischief. This night march, which, from its extraordinary difficulty and boldness, had never been anticipated by the French generals, gave Wellington a full day's journey in advance of them, and the French cavalry did not overtake the Allies in any force till the forenoon of the 23d. Several sharp affairs between the cavalry on either side then took place. In particular, at

* *Ante*, iv. 319.

the passage of the Hormaza, General Anson's brigade twice charged the head of the pursuers' as they forded, and for three hours checked the pursuit. A more serious action took place near Vinta del Pozo, when the French cavalry, who had at length forced the passage, and were hotly pursuing Anson's horsemen, who were retiring in disorder, were received by two battalions of the King's German Legion drawn up in square. The Imperial cavalry came on with their wonted gallantry and loud shouts, but they were unable to retaliate upon the Germans the disaster of the 23d June:* the steady squares received them with a rolling volley; and after several ineffectual charges, in the course of which they sustained a severe loss, the French squadrons were obliged to retire, and the retreat on that day was continued without any further molestation. The army retiring in two columns, crossed the Pisuerga, and headquarters were fixed for the night at Cordovilla. Much disorder prevailed there during the night, in consequence of the soldiers, who already, from the commencement of the retreat, had become relaxed in their discipline, breaking into the subterranean caves in that vicinity, where the wine of the vintage was stored, and the effects of intemperance generally appeared when the troops began to move next morning: but luckily the enemy was not aware of the circumstance, and the retreat of twenty miles was conducted that day without molestation as far as Duenas, across the Carrion, where the Guards who had disembarked at Corunna, joined the army nearly on the spot where Sir John Moore had commenced his forward movement against Soult four years before.[1]

Oct. 23.

Oct. 24.

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Oct. 26, 1812. Gurw. ix. 511, 512. Beamish, ii. 111, 116. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 76, 77. Nap. v. 295, 298.

It had now become evident that the French

* *Ante*, viii. 455.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

cavalry, nearly double that of the Allies, and fresh from cantonments, while the British and Portuguese were extenuated by the fatigues of a long campaign, could hardly be opposed with success in the open field; and therefore the utmost vigilance was requisite in conducting a long march, in presence of an enemy so superior in numbers generally, and especially predominant in that arm, so essential during a retreat. The troops, accordingly, were rested a day behind the Carrion, to recruit their strength and give time for concentration; the whole bridges over that river were mined for explosion, and on the day following the retreat was continued towards the Douro. Unfortunately, however, the bridges at Palencia over the Carrion had not been occupied in sufficient strength, and Foy drove out the troops who held the town, and gained the bridges before the explosion took place. A ford was also dexterously discovered by the enemy near Villamuriel, while the bridge over the Pisuerga at Tariejo was prematurely fired, and failed in its effect, so that the French horsemen galloped over and made the party in possession of the town prisoners. These untoward events destroyed the strength of Wellington's position, for over the bridges thus won the enemy could pour over in any numbers they chose; and the left was accordingly thrown back, which had been hotly engaged nearly the whole day. At length the English general, seeing that the enemy's progress in that quarter seriously endangered the whole army, repaired to the spot, and ordered an offensive movement to drive the French back again over the river. Those who had crossed the ford at Villamuriel were immediately attacked by two brigades under Major-General Oswald's orders, and driven across the Carrion with considerable loss,[1]

Continuance of the retreat across the Carrion, and actions there.

Oct. 25.

[1] Jones, ii. 134, 136. Nap. v. 301, 304. Gurw. ix. 512. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 78, 79. Belm. i. 242.

though the Allies suffered severely, and Alava was wounded while heading the Spanish infantry in the pursuit. CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

After this check, the army retired sixteen miles on the following day without molestation to Cabezon, on the Pisuerga; and, as the ground on the southern bank of the river is very strong, and the approach to the bridge difficult, the troops were halted for two days there, while the destruction of the bridge at Tordesillas equally prevented their progress in that direction. On the 29th, the bridges at Cabezon and Valladolid were both blown up, and the army retreated across the Douro, the whole bridges over which were destroyed. The French, however, having got a body of horse across by swimming, immediately commenced repairing the bridge at Tordesillas; upon which the British were moved in strength to that point, and immediately began throwing up batteries, which stopped the advance of the enemy in that quarter. Souham made no further attempt to continue the pursuit beyond the Douro at this time, as he was unwilling to hazard a general engagement till the approach of Joseph and Soult enabled him to do so with a decided superiority; and the British remained unmolested behind its broad stream till the 6th of November, when the bridges both at Toro and Tordesillas having been restored, and the near approach of Soult, with an overwhelming force from the south, rendering the line of the Douro no longer tenable, the retreat was resumed. On the 8th the army effected its junction with Hill's corps, and both united, took up a position at Alba de Tormes and San Christoval, on the ground which the army had twice occupied before,[1] and which was hallowed by the

Junction of Wellington and Hill near Salamanca.

Oct. 29.

Nov. 6.

Nov. 8.

Vict. et Conq. xxi. 78, 83. Jones, ii. 135, 137. Nap. v. 302, 304. Gurw. ix. 512, 516.

CHAP. LXIII.

recollection of the glorious victory of which it had been the theatre.

1812.

And of Soult and Souham.

While the British, who possessed the advantage of an interior line of communication, were thus concentrating their forces in front of Salamanca, Soult was following Hill's corps with all the expedition in his power, and stretching out his light troops to the northward, in order to feel for the corps of Souham, which was descending from the Douro. On the 6th, his headquarters were at Areolo, and on the day

Nov. 7.

following the advanced posts of the two armies entered into communication by Medina del Campo. The main bodies were not long in effecting a junc-

Nov. 10.

tion; and on the 10th the united force advanced towards the British post at Alba de Tormes. General Hamilton, with a brigade of Portuguese, held the castle at that place, round which some field-works had been hastily constructed; and though Soult battered it with eighteen pieces of artillery, to which the Allies had only four guns to reply, yet their fire of musketry was kept up with such vigour that the enemy did not venture upon an assault, but sought for and found a ford higher up the Tormes, at Galisancho. On the following day the whole French army passed over, and took post in a strong position near Mozarbes, from whence detachments of their numerous cavalry threatened the communication of the British with Ciudad Rodrigo. The force now at the disposal of the French marshals was very formidable, amounting to no less than ninety-five thousand men, of whom twelve thousand were superb cavalry, with a hundred and twenty pieces of cannon.[1]*

[1] Jones, ii. 139, 140. Nap. v. 319, 321. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 85, 86. Belm. i. 241, 242. Gurw. ix. 520, 542, 552.

* "The three united armies mustered ninety-five thousand combatants."—BELMAS, i. 243.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

To oppose this immense force, Wellington had fifty-two thousand British and Portuguese, including four thousand horse, and fourteen thousand Spaniards; but on the last little reliance could be placed in a regular engagement. With so great an inferiority, it was impossible for the English general to attack the French on the strong ground which they themselves had selected; but he offered battle in his own position, and for this purpose withdrew to the famous position of Arapeiles. The sight of that memorable field strongly excited the soldiers of both armies; the French, conscious of their superiority in number, demanded with loud cries to be led to the combat, hoping to wash out the recollection of their former defeat on the very spot on which it had been sustained. The sight of the ground, still blanched by the skeletons of their countrymen, and strewed with fragments of casques and cuirasses, excited in the highest degree their warlike enthusiasm. The British, nothing doubtful of the result of a second battle of Salamanca, clustered in great strength on the two Arapeiles, and the ridge of Ariba, yet moist with the blood of their heroic comrades; and gazing with stern resolve on the interminable masses of the enemy, panted for the thrilling moment which was to bring to a decisive issue their long protracted contest. The opinions of the French generals, however, were divided as to the course which should be pursued. Jourdan, whose martial fire age had not extinguished, was eager to fight immediately; and for this purpose to bear down at once on the Allies, and hazard all on the issue of a single battle. Soult, on the other hand, better instructed in the character of the troops with whom he had to deal, hesitated to attack them where they stood,[1] and instead, moved a

Wellington offers battle, which is refused.

Belm. i. 242. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 87, 88. Jones, ii. 140. Gurw. ix. 552, 553

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

considerable part of his force to the left, so as to menace the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo, much as Marmont had done, but on a wider circle, so as to be beyond the reach of the falcon swoop which had proved so fatal to his predecessor.[1]

He retreats to Ciudad Rodrigo. Nov. 15.

Wellington, knowing that the immense superiority of the enemy, especially in cavalry, rendered it an easy matter for them to outflank his position, and disturb his communications, took the resolution, as they would not fight, to retreat: already the baggage had defiled through Salamanca, and at three o'clock in the afternoon several loud explosions in the British rear announced to both armies that the movement had commenced. The operation, however, was a very hazardous one; for, in performing it, the Allied army, defiling almost within cannon-shot of the enemy, presented their flank, several miles in length, to his attack; and a daring general had the same opportunity for a brilliant stroke which had been presented to Wellington by Marmont, on the same ground, four months before. Possibly the extreme ardour of the French soldiers might, notwithstanding the prudence of their leader, have brought on a general action; but in that decisive moment the star of England prevailed: a violent storm of rain, accompanied by a thick mist, came on, which for two hours rendered it impossible to see any object more than a few yards ahead; and during this interval of darkness, the whole British army, in three columns, having the advantage of moving on the high-roads, while the enemy could only attack by cross lanes, now almost impassable from wet, moved safely past the dangerous ground. A few cavalry alone followed the Allies, and made only two hundred prisoners;[1] and the single trophy which the enemy

[1] Vict. et Conq. xxi. 86, 89. Belm. i. 242, 243. Jones, ii. 140. Nap. v. 328,330. Gurw. ix. 552, 558.

could show from a crisis which might have changed the fate of Spain and the world, was the English second in command, Sir Edward Paget, who accidentally fell on the day following into the hands of a small party of horse, while riding unattended from one column to the other, during the darkness of a severe storm.

Extraordinary hardships and losses of the retreat.

The retreat from the Arapeiles to Ciudad Rodrigo lasted but three days, and it was only disturbed by the cavalry of the French, almost all their infantry and guns having halted at Salamanca. Nevertheless, the distress of the troops for the most part was very great, the disorders frightful, and the loss sustained very considerable. During the whole march the weather was to the last degree inclement; storms of wind and rain succeeded each other with hardly any intermission; and the spirit of the soldiers, already weakened by the long continuance and severe fatigues of the retreat, sunk in an extraordinary degree, and precipitated them into general confusion and insubordination. The roads were so deep that it was with the utmost difficulty that the guns and baggage-waggons could be dragged through; the supplies, especially of Sir R. Hill's corps, almost totally failed, from the troops having been thrown off their former communications without gaining any new ones; and the soldiers, compelled to straggle in quest of subsistence, fell into the usual disorders of a disorganized army, and in great part yielded to the unbounded passion for intoxication which breaks out in all men during severe distress, but has, in every age, been in a peculiar manner the disgrace of the English people. On the 16th, the march of the army was through a continued forest, where vast quantities of swine were feeding under the trees; the soldiers im-

Nov. 16.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. Nov. 16. Nov. 17.

mediately dispersed to shoot the game thus presented to their hand; and such a rolling of musketry was heard through the woods, that Wellington at first thought the enemy were upon them. A sharp skirmish took place, as the rearguard of the army was descending the steep slope which leads from the high table-land covered with the forest to the Huebra stream, which however was passed with very little loss: a deviation from orders on the part of some of the officers in direction of columns, had wellnigh occasioned a serious loss, by taking the men to a place where the road, though more direct, was crossed by the river in an impassable state of flood; from which they were only extricated by being led back by Wellington in person, happily without the enemy's knowledge, to the ford which he had originally assigned; and on the 17th the weather was so dreadful, and the privations of the troops so excessive, that most serious disasters might be anticipated if the retreat were conducted further in such calamitous circumstances. Happily, as this was the worst day of their sufferings, so it was the last: Soult, whose troops were suffering nearly as much as those of the Allies, was compelled by utter starvation to discontinue the pursuit at the Huebra; a few squadrons only followed to the Tamanes; on the 18th the weather cleared up; provisions in plenty were obtained from the magazines at Ciudad Rodrigo, and liberally served out to the famishing troops; and the wearied men, finding fuel and dry bivouacs on the sandy hills near that fortress, forgot their fatigues around the blazing watch-fires, and after six months' incessant toils and dangers, sunk into the enjoyment of undisturbed repose.[1]

[1] Nap. v. 334, 335. Jones, ii. 140, 141. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 88, 89. Belm. i. 243. Gurw. ix. 554, 555.

Both parties were now thoroughly exhausted with their fatigues, and not only rest, but a separation on

either side in quest of subsistence, had become indispensable. If Soult had remained, with all his forces together, for a week longer, one-half of his soldiers, and probably all his horses, would have perished of actual famine; and if Wellington's retreat in similar storms had continued a few days more, his army would have been wellnigh dissolved. Both the French and the English commanders accordingly put their troops into winter-quarters, and the vast arrays which had so recently crowded the banks of the Tormes were dispersed over a wide extent of surface. The British went into cantonments on the Coa and the Agueda; the left being thrown back to Lamego, and the right advanced so far forward as to hold the pass of Bejar. Headquarters were again established at Frenada. Soult's noble army was entirely dislocated: his own headquarters were established at Toledo in La Mancha; Joseph returned with his guards to Madrid; and the bulk of the army was cantoned in Old and New Castile, between the Douro and the Tagus, Salamanca being occupied in strength by two divisions. But the ground lost in the campaign was never again recovered: Asturias and Estremadura remained in the undisturbed possession of the Spaniards; the Imperial standards never again crossed the Sierra Morena; and Andalusia, Murcia, and Granada were for ever delivered from the oppression of the invader.[1]

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Both armies are put into winter-quarters.

[1] Vict. et Conq. xxi. 85, 90. Belm. i. 243. Jones, i. 141. Nap. v. 337, 340.

The losses sustained by the British and Portuguese during this retreat, by casualties or prisoners in the field, did not exceed fifteen hundred men; but the stragglers who fell into the enemy's hands were much more numerous, and the prisoners taken in this way exceeded three thousand. Altogether, from the time that the siege of Burgos was abandoned, the

Losses of the retreat, and severe address of Wellington to his troops.

49 CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

army had been weakened by the loss of nearly seven thousand men. The insubordination of the troops, and the frightful habits of intemperance to which in many cases they surrendered themselves, were the main causes of this serious diminution: for the retreat had been conducted with extraordinary skill; the men of both armies had retired above two hundred miles, in presence of greatly superior forces, without a single battalion being broken, or a gun or standard taken; no stores, treasure, or provisions had been destroyed; none of the sick and wounded abandoned; no night marches, with the exception of that under the cannon of the castle of Burgos, had taken place; the journeys gone over during the day had been far from excessive, and till the last three days, when the extraordinary throng had occasioned a deficiency in the supplies, no want of provisions had been experienced by the troops. When, notwithstanding these circumstances, it was still found that the loss from the defalcation of marauders and the capture of drunkards had been so serious, and that the discipline of the army had been relaxed to a great degree during the retreat, Wellington deemed it indispensable to make a great effort to recall all ranks to a sense of their duty; and for this purpose addressed a severe letter of admonition to the officers commanding divisions and brigades, complaining in an especial manner of the habitual inattention of regimental officers to their various duties, in so far as the subordination, discipline, and comforts of the troops were concerned.[1]*

[1] Gurw. ix. 575. Wellington to generals of division, Nov. 28, 1812. Jones, ii. 141. Scherer, ii. 209. Jackson, ii. 247.

* "The army has met with no disaster; it has suffered no privations which but trifling attention on the part of the officers could not have prevented; it has suffered no hardships excepting those resulting from the necessity of being exposed to the inclemencies of the weather at a

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

Never was a document published by a British commander which produced a stronger sensation, or gave rise to more vehement feelings, than this celebrated address. That the complaints were in great part well founded, and that every one's recollection could afford ample confirmation of the material facts stated, was indeed certain; but still, the necessity of publishing them to the army, and consequently, by the English newspapers, to all Europe, did not appear equally apparent; and even if it had been necessary, it was urged that some allowance should have been made for men who had been engaged for nearly eleven months in constant sieges, marches, or battles, and whose efforts, during that period, had delivered half of the Peninsula, and drawn upon them the enemy's military force from the whole of Spain. The reproaches, too, though generally well founded, were not applicable to some corps, particularly the light division and foot guards, who had joined from Corunna; and Wellington was not aware that his own admirable arrangements for the supply of provisions to his troops had been, in many cases, rendered totally nugatory, from the impossibility of getting the means of transport for the

Effect it produced on the army.

time when they were most severe. The necessity for retreat existing, none was ever made on which the troops made such short marches; none on which they made such long and repeated halts; and none on which the retreating armies were so little pressed on their rear by the enemy. Yet, from the moment the troops commenced their retreat from the neighbourhood of Madrid on the one hand, and Burgos on the other, the officers lost all command over the men. Irregularities and outrages of all descriptions were committed with impunity, and losses have been sustained which ought never to have been incurred. The discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degree relaxed; but I am concerned to observe, that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect in the late campaign to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever been, or of which I have ever read."—WELLINGTON *to Officers commanding Divisions and Brigades*, ix. 574, 575.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

stores, or the negligence of inferior functionaries in carrying his orders into execution; so that, when he supposed the men were getting three rations a-day regularly served out, they were in fact living on acorns which they picked up, or swine which they shot, in the woods. For these reasons, the reproof was, not without grounds, complained of as unjust by many; but there can be no doubt that to the great body of the troops, the justice of the remarks was what rendered them so unpalatable; and that the cogency of the maxim,—"the greater the truth, the greater the libel," never was more signally evinced than on this occasion. As usual after such admonitions, however, the reproof, though universally complained of, in the end produced salutary effects; the officers loudly declaimed against the injustice with which they had been dealt, but quietly set about remedying the disorders which they were well aware had crept into the service; vast improvements were effected in the organization and arrangements of the troops before the next campaign; and all admitted that it was in a great degree to their beneficial effect that the triumphs of Vittoria and the Pyrenees were to be ascribed.[1]

[1] Nap. v. 357, 359. Jones, ii. 143. Jackson, ii. 217.

Operations in the south and east of Spain.

While this surprising campaign was going on in the centre and north of Spain, the operations in the south and on the east coast, though not equally brilliant, sustained the character of the British arms, and, in their ultimate effects, were attended with important results in the deliverance of the Peninsula. It has been already noticed * how much Wellington found his operations impeded, immediately before the battle of Salamanca, by the project of Lord William Bentinck to commence his grand diversion on the

* *Ante*, viii. p. 440.

Italian shores, thereby reducing the British expedition destined to act on the east of Spain to six thousand men. Such as it was, however, this armament produced a very considerable impression, and clearly proved of what importance, on the general issue of the campaign, the operations in that quarter, if more vigorously conducted and with a larger force, might have been. General Maitland, who commanded this force, arrived at Port Mahon in Minorca, in the middle of July, and at first stood across for the coast of Catalonia, with a view, if possible, to a *coup-de-main* against Taragona; but finding that, though preparations for a considerable rising in that quarter had been made, there was no Spanish force in existence capable of keeping the field as a regular army, and that they could only bring eight thousand somatenes into the field, while the French had thirteen thousand disposable men in the province, besides Suchet's force, of a still greater amount, in Valencia, he wisely judged that it would be hopeless to attempt an effort in that province, and therefore made for Alicante, where a strong fortress, still in the hands of the Murcians, offered a secure base for his operations. There, accordingly, he landed, in the beginning of August; and his arrival was most opportune and beneficial to the common cause, as it saved that fortress, which was menaced with a siege, in consequence of the defeat of General O'Donnell, who, with the last reserves of the Murcians, six thousand strong, had been totally routed by a division of Suchet's army under Harispe, only ten days before, at the mouth of the pass of Castalla, and was now wholly unable to keep the field.[1]

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

July 20.

July 31.

Aug. 7.

July 21.

[1] Jones, ii. 121. Nap. v. 214, 230. Tor. v. 111, 112.

Maitland's forces were all disembarked at Alicante by the 11th August; but, although he found

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

himself in communication with a body of Spaniards considerable in point of numerical amount, yet no reliance could be placed upon them for operations in the field; and he was soon overwhelmed by the innumerable crosses, jealousies, and vexations, to which every British commander throughout the war, without exception, was subjected, who attempted to combine operations with the Peninsular troops, and which the iron frame and invincible perseverance of Wellington alone had been able to overcome. The governor of Alicante, in the first instance, refused to give him possession of that fortress, and only a limited number of men were permitted to remain within its walls; of the British soldiers only three thousand were English or German, who could be relied on for the real shock, the remainder being Mediterranean mercenaries, whose steadiness in action was untried and doubtful; and the moment operations in the field were proposed, such extraordinary difficulties as to providing subsistence and the means of transport were thrown in the way by the Spanish authorities and commanders, that Maitland abandoned the attempt in despair, and not long after, under the combined influence of bad health and disgust, resigned his command. At the same time, twelve hundred men, under General, now Sir Rufane Donkin, disembarked at Denia, on the east of Alicante, but were speedily assailed by superior forces and forced to re-embark. He was succeeded by General Mackenzie, who held the command only for a few weeks, when he was superseded by General Clinton: but he too was paralysed by the difficulties with which he was surrounded; and though on the 22d November the citadel of Alicante was surrendered to the keeping of the British, still no offensive movement worth noti-

Landing of the British forces at Alicante, and difficulties they experienced.

Oct. 5.

Nov. 22.

cing was attempted. General Campbell came next with four thousand fresh troops from Sicily; but the season for active operations had now passed, and the winter was spent in strenuous efforts to put the army on a more efficient footing. It was fortunate, that at this period Suchet was so far deceived by the habitual exaggerations of the Spaniards, that he attempted nothing, believing that the Allies had fifty thousand men in his front; and thus this expedition, though it did nothing else, yet produced the important effect of detaining his whole force in that part of Spain, and preventing any part of it from joining the mass which was concentrating from all other quarters against Wellington in the plains of Old Castile.[1]

[1] Belm. i. 244. Nap. v. 341, 349. Tor. v. 112, 114. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 97, 103.

Operations in Catalonia and Asturias.

Though the war in Catalonia and the Asturias was not distinguished by any brilliant events during this campaign, yet the Spaniards were in both slowly regaining the ascendency. The weight of the English army, though distant, operated with sensible effect in both these provinces, and by compelling the French to concentrate their forces to succour menaced points, or await contingent events, allowed the inhabitants to wrest from them several important points. In spring, Montserrat was abandoned by the invaders, and immediately occupied by Colonel Green, who, with some Spanish bands, again fortified that important stronghold. Decaen and Maurice Mathieu collected their forces, and in the end of July drove the Spaniards a second time from it; but, instead of retaining their conquest, they set fire to the buildings, and the flames of the monastery told all the inhabitants of the adjoining plains that the holy mountain was no longer polluted by the presence of the spoiler. The bands of Lacy,

July 29.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812. D'Erolles, Rovira, and Melans, however, kept undisputed possession of the whole mountain ranges with which the country abounded: the power of the French extended only over the fortresses which they held, and the plains, and their immediate vicinity; and so precarious was their authority in more remote quarters, that eight thousand men were required to keep open the communication between Gerona, Barcelona, and Taragona. In Asturias, an English squadron, commanded by Sir Home Popham, appeared in the end of June on the coast, and did excellent service by keeping the French posts in a state of constant alarm, so as to prevent Caffarelli from detaching any considerable force to the aid of Marmont previous to the battle of Salamanca. Castro Urdiales, a strong fort on the sea-coast, was taken in the beginning of July, which enabled the squadron to communicate freely with the insurgents in the interior; and although several attempts on Santander, Guetaria, and Bilboa failed, from the strong fortifications with which the French had established themselves in these towns, yet they were all evacuated and fell into the hands of the Spaniards on occasion of the general concentration of the French forces in the northern provinces, which followed the disaster of Salamanca. Bilboa, indeed, was re-occupied by Caffarelli on the 27th August, but the whole coast, from Corunna to Guetaria, remained in the hands of the Allies, and the English vessels of war powerfully contributed to foment the insurrection in these important provinces; while in the centre of Spain the power of Joseph was so ephemeral, that when Soult, with the armies of the south and centre, passed on in pursuit of Hill's army in the end of October, Elio, the Empecinado,[1] and Bassecour, having united

Oct. 19.

June 20.

July 6.

Aug. 15.

Nov. 2.

[1] Belm. i. 246, 247. Nap. v. 341, 343. Tor. v. 66, 89.

the bands in the neighbourhood of Madrid, re-occupied that capital, where they committed great excesses, and thrust out the garrison, who, with a crowd of helpless dependants, again fell a burden on the unhappy monarch in the plains of Old Castile.

General results of the campaign.

Such was the memorable campaign of Salamanca, the most glorious, in a military point of view, of which the English annals can boast; the most decisive in its results in favour of the Allied cause, which had yet occurred in the Revolutionary war. For the first time since the star of Napoleon had appeared in the ascendant, the balance had not only hung even between the contending powers, but inclined decidedly to the other side. At the opening of the campaign, the French armies occupied the whole of Spain, from the Asturian rocks to the bay of Cadiz. The great frontier fortresses of Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo were in their hands; and the British army, restrained within the bounds of Portugal, seemed unable to pass the giants who stood to guard the entrance into the Spanish territory. At its close, both these vital strongholds had been wrested from their arms; Andalusia, and the whole provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena delivered from their oppression; a mortal blow to their power struck on the plains of Castile; Madrid had welcomed its deliverers within its gates; and Cadiz, revived after its three years' blockade, beheld the gigantic works of its besiegers, and their two thousand guns, the trophies of its deliverance. In Marshal Soult's words, the battle of Salamanca had indeed proved a great historic event, which had resounded through Europe and the New World. The campaigns of Marlborough had no such momentous triumphs

CHAP. LXIII.

1812.

to commemorate; the glories of Cressy and Azincour were in comparison sterile in durable results.

Great as was the disappointment felt, in the first instance, in England, at the untoward conclusion of the campaign, and the calamitous issue of the retreat from Burgos, it was yet evident, on a calm retrospect of its results, and the relative situation of parties at its commencement and termination, that the success gained had been immense, and that the French power in the Peninsula had received a fatal wound. True, the British standards had been again driven from the Spanish territory; true, Wellington had re-assumed his old positions on the Coa and the Agueda: but how had this been effected? By a concentration of the French forces from all parts of Spain, and the abandonment in one month of the fruits of four years of bloodshed and conquest. Such a sacrifice could not again be made; no second Andalusia remained to recruit the armies of the north after another overthrow. A fresh disaster like that of Salamanca would drive the invaders, as by a whirlwind, from the whole Peninsula. The sense of this, which pervaded the breasts of the officers and soldiers in both armies, consoled the Allies for their retreat, and depressed the Imperial legions even in the midst of their transient success. The whole warlike establishments of the latter had been lost; in a military point of view, their hold of all the Peninsula to the south of the Ebro had been loosened. The great arsenals of Madrid, Seville, Ciudad Rodrigo, and the lines before Cadiz, had fallen into the enemy's hands or been destroyed; no reserve parks remained to enable them to attempt the siege of the frontier places of Portugal; no fortresses were yet

Its vast effect in loosening the French power in the Peninsula.

in their possession to delay the enemy, should he make a second inroad into the interior of Spain; a single disaster in the Douro would instantly compel the evacuation of Madrid and Valencia, and send the whole French armies in confusion behind the Ebro. A sense of this insecurity paralysed the French as much as it animated the British army; the perception of it, joined to an ardent thirst for vengeance for the wrongs they had received, had again revived in a fearful degree the insurrection in the whole provinces of the kingdom not actually in the possession of the Imperial troops. The recent appointment of Wellington as generalissimo of the Spanish armies, promised to impart to them a degree of efficiency which they had never previously attained, and to direct them in one uniform plan of operations against the enemy; while the evacuation of more than half, and by far the richest half of the Spanish territory, proved a still more sensible wound to Napoleon, by depriving him of the means of longer carrying on his favourite system of making war maintain war, and throwing his armies in the Peninsula for their main supplies on the treasury of Paris, already severely drained by the unparalleled expenses of the Russian war.[1]

Oct. 12.

[1] Belm. i. 247. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 90.

Memorable as the merits of Wellington had been since the commencement of the Peninsular contest, they were outdone by the shining exploits of this campaign. The secrecy of his preparations, the rapidity and force of his strokes, the judicious direction of his attacks, the vast effects which followed from them, all revealed the consummate commander, now for the first time relieved from the load which had oppressed him, and, by the celerity of his movements, and the skilful use of a central position, coun-

Wellington's great merit in the conduct of the campaign.

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

terbalancing what would otherwise have been deemed an insurmountable superiority of numbers. When it is recollected that Wellington, with an army which never could bring sixty thousand men into the field, gained these wonderful successes over an enemy who had two hundred and forty thousand effective veteran troops at his disposal, and captured the two great frontier fortresses under the very eyes of two marshals, who, as the event proved, could assemble a hundred thousand men for their relief, it is evident that more than fortune or national courage had been at work, and that consummate generalship had come to the direction of tried valour and experienced discipline. The secrecy of the preparation for, and the rapidity of the attack on Ciudad Rodrigo; the stern resolution of the assault of Badajoz; the eagle eye which caught the moment of decisive victory at Salamanca; the strategic skill which separated the armies of the north and centre, and recovered the advantages gained by Marmont on the banks of the Guarena, form so many models of military skill which will ever engage the attention and command the admiration of succeeding generations.

Reaction upon themselves of the French mode of making war.

In truth, however, here, as elsewhere in the great revolutions of the world, moral causes were at the bottom of the change; and the talents of individual actors intrusted with the direction of affairs were chiefly conspicuous in the sagacity with which they discerned, and the skill with which they availed themselves of, those general impulses to mankind, whose operation, how important soever, was shrouded from the eye of ordinary observers. The more that the memorable history of the Peninsular campaigns is studied, the more clearly will it appear that it was the oppressive mode in which the French

carried on the contest which wrought out their ruin; and that it was to Napoleon's favourite maxim, that war should maintain war, that we are to ascribe his fall. Not only did this iniquitous system every where inspire the most unbounded and lasting hatred at their domination, but it imposed upon his lieutenants and viceroys the necessity of such a separation of their forces, with a view to the permanent levying and collecting of contributions, as necessarily exposed them to the danger of being cut up in detail, and precluded the possibility of any combined or united operations. The eccentric irruption into Andalusia, when Wellington in Portugal was still unsubdued, is the chief cause to which all the subsequent disasters in Spain are to be ascribed; and it arose clearly from the necessity of seizing upon hitherto untouched fields of plunder. The marshals were never weary of expressing their astonishment at the unwise policy which kept their armies detached from each other, and melting away in inglorious warfare in their separate provinces, when the English army retained a central position, menacing alike to them all. But the secret motive of Napoleon in so distributing his force was very apparent. If he brought them into large bodies to wage a united war with the English general, the occupation of many of the provinces would require to be discontinued, the levying of the contributions would cease, and the cost of his armies, hitherto wholly defrayed by Spanish resources, would fall with overwhelming weight on the Imperial treasury. Hence arose the dispersion of the armies, the military governments, the jealousies of the marshals, the weakness of the king, the exasperation of the inhabitants, the triumphs of the British, and the loss of the Penin-

CHAP. LXIII. 1812.

sula. The mighty fabric, based on injustice, reared in rapine, cemented by blood, involved in itself the principles of its own destruction. The very greatness of its power, the wide spread of its extension, only accelerated the period of its fall. All that was wanting was an enduring enemy, that had discernment enough to see, and talent adequate to improve, the chances thus arising in his favour, and a position where a sure refuge might be found till the period of reaction should arrive. The constancy of England presented such a foe, the eye of Wellington constituted such a commander, and the rocks of Torres Vedras furnished such a stronghold.

CHAPTER LXIV.

SKETCH OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE—WAR BETWEEN THE OTTOMANS AND RUSSIANS—FROM 1808 TO 1812.

ARGUMENT.

Durable Interest of the Eastern World—Singular extremes of Civilisation and Refinement which there appear—Present Interests and Prospects of the East—Political Combinations of which it is becoming the Theatre—Wide Difference between the Structure of Society in the East and West—Constant Submission to Authority in the Former—Rapid Progress of its early Civilisation—Proportionate Rapid Growth of Corruption—Provision made for its Correction—In the energy of the Tartar and Arabian Tribes—System of Oriental Government, and Descent of the Throne—Precarious Tenure of Inferior Authority—Rapid Growth and Ephemeral Duration of Wealth and Greatness—Consequent Oppression to which Industry is generally exposed—Seeds of Weakness, in consequence of the want of Hereditary Institutions—Counteracting Causes which have preserved Society in the East—The Simplicity and General Purity of Manners—The Absence of the Corruption of Power among the People—The Municipal Institutions, and Village Communities—The Comparative Security of Mountain Fastnesses—Vigour which the Mahometan Religion and the Hereditary Descent of the Throne have communicated to Turkey—Physical Description of the Turkish Empire—Causes of its Decline—The Ottoman Mode of Fighting and System of War—Description of the Theatre of War between the Danube and Constantinople—Great Progress which the Russians have made during the last Hundred years—Negotiations between the Russians and Turks after the Treaty of Tilsit—Commencement of the War with Turkey—First Successes of the Russians on the Danube—Siege and Fall of Brahilow—Siege and Capture of Silistria—Desperate Turkish defence of the Breaches of Fortified Towns—Mode of Warfare by the Russians against the Turks—Their more recent tactics in Wars with them—Turkish mode of Fighting—Great effect of the Conquest of the Nomade Nations by the Russians—Importance of the Unhealthiness of the Plain of the Danube on the Wars with the Russians—Importance of the Fortresses on the Danube—State of Turkey at the Opening of the War with the Russians in 1807—Revolution at Constantinople—Dethronement of Sultaun Selim, and Accession of Mustapha—Counter-Revolution at Constantinople—Fresh Disturbances—Deposition of Mustapha—Death of Selim—and Accession of Mahmoud—A third Revolution—The Grand Vizier Barayctar is Killed with Mustapha, and the Janissaries triumph—Passive indifference of the People during these Disorders—Napoleon's Desertion of the Turks in the Treaty of Tilsit—Causes which delayed serious Operations till the Spring of 1809—Campaign of that year—Checkered Successes on both sides—Annexation of Wallachia and Moldavia to Russia, and Campaign of 1810—Great Trade of the English up the Danube into

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

Germany at this time—First Operations of the Campaign of 1810—Description of Schumla—Unsuccessful Operations of the Russians against that Town—Preparations for the Assault of Roudschouck—Dreadful Defeat of the Assault—Operations which followed this disaster—March of the Seraskier of Sophia for the Raising of the Siege—Kaminski's Plan of Attack on the Turkish Camp—Battle of Battin—Blockade, and Final Capture of the Turkish Camp.—Capitulation of Roudschouck—Evacuation of Roudschouck, and Ruin of Sistowa—Conclusion of the Campaign—Great Draught of Troops from the Danube to Poland—Battle of Roudschouck—Evacuation of Roudschouck by the Russians—The Turks cross the Danube—Measures for Assisting them taken by Kutusoff—Distress of the Turks in their Intrenchments—Great part of them are obliged to Surrender—Concluding operations of the Campaign—Commencement of Negotiations between the Russians and French for a Peace—Treaty of Bucharest—March of the Russian Troops for the Vistula—Reflections on the Campaign—Character of Sultaun Mahmoud—Incompatibility of Improvement or Renovation with the Mahometan Institutions.

Durable interest of the Eastern world.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the prodigies of European civilisation, and all the lasting benefits which, both in ancient and modern times, the race of Japhet has conferred upon the species, its history will never equal, in the profound interest which it will excite in the human breast to the remotest eras of existence, that which arises from the contemplation of the EASTERN WORLD. It is there that is to be found the birth-place of the human race; there the scenes alike of the earliest and the greatest efforts of civilisation; there the spot from which the fortunes of the whole human family have taken their rise. The greatness of the states of modern Europe may have produced a more durable impression upon the fortunes of the species; the achievements of their intellect may have exalted higher the character of humanity; but they will never awaken so profound an interest as those which carry us back to the original separation of nations, and the first cradle of mankind.

Independent of the interest which naturally attaches to the East, from the sublime events and heart-stirring episodes of which in every age it has been the theatre—independent of the obligations which

1808.

we owe to it as the birth-place of letters and of figures, of knowledge and of religion—there is something in the simplicity of Eastern story, and the pathos of Asiatic incident, which must ever touch the inmost recesses of our hearts. Although the human race have existed longer there than in any other part of the globe; although wealth exhibited its earliest prodigies on the plain of Shinar, and commerce first began with the march of the camels through the Syrian deserts; yet society has always existed in a more romantic and interesting form in the Eastern than in the Western world. The extremes of civilisation and simplicity, of wealth and poverty, of grandeur and humility, have always been there brought into close proximity with each other. The splendour of the capital is to be found close beside the rudeness of the desert; and the traveller, equally in the days of Herodotus and of the present time, on emerging from the greatest cities, finds himself surrounded by the camels of the children of Ishmael. The whole empires of central Asia are penetrated in all directions by these nomade tribes. They have, in every age, formed a distinguishing feature of Asiatic society; and at times have exercised the most important influence on the fortunes of mankind. Through every subsequent stage of society, nations will recur with interest to these primeval occupations of their race. The scenes, the manners, the imagery of the East, will always form the profoundest chords that can be touched in the human heart; and to the last ages of the world, man, by an indelible instinct, will revert to those regions of his pristine existence with the same interest with which the individual looks back to the scenes of his own infancy.

Interesting extremes of refinement and civilisation which there appear.

Nor are the present situation and future destinies of the Oriental states, less calculated to awaken the

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

interest alike of the heedless observer of passing events and the contemplative student of the fortunes of mankind. By a mysterious agency it would appear that the fate of man, even in the most advanced stages of his progress, is indissolubly united with the Eastern world; and the present course of events, not less clearly than the whole scope of prophecy, concur in demonstrating that it is there that the great changes calculated to affect the destiny of the species are to be brought about. The course of civilisation, which hitherto constantly has been from east to west, has now, to all appearance, begun to alter its direction The vast wave of civilisation is rolling steadily towards the Rocky Mountains; and its standard will, erelong, be arrested only by the waters of the Pacific. But the progress of human improvement is not destined to be thus finally barred. For the first time since the creation of man, the stream of improvement has set in in the opposite direction: the British Australian colonies are rapidly sowing the seeds of the European race in the regions of the sun; and even the sober eye of historic anticipation can now dimly descry the time when the eastern Archipelago and the isles of the Pacific are to be cleared by the efforts of civilized men, and blessed by the light of the Christian religion.

Present interest and prospects of the East.

Nor are political events less clearly bringing back the interests and the struggles of civilized man to the pristine scene of his birth. The two great powers which have now, in an indelible manner, imprinted their image upon the human species, England and Russia, are there slowly but inevitably coming into collision. Constantinople is the inestimable prize which, as it will soon appear, brought the empires of France and Russia into hostility, and led to the overthrow of the greatest efforts of European

Political combinations of which it is becoming the theatre.

power by the energy of barbaric patriotism and the force of Asiatic cavalry. The same glittering object has retained the rival powers of Great Britain and Russia in thinly disguised hostility since the fall of Napoleon's power; while "the necessity of conquest to existence," felt equally by the British empire in India as by the French in Europe, has already impelled the British battalions over the Himalayan snows; brought the stream of victory, for the first time in the annals of mankind, from the shores of the Ganges to the steppes of Tartary; arrayed the sable natives of Bengal as victors, in the cradle of the Mogul power and on the edge of the steppes of Samarcand; and brought the British battalions, though in an inverse order, into the footsteps of the phalanx of Alexander.

Wide difference between the structure of society in the East and West.

The structure of society, the condition of mankind, and the causes of human happiness or misery, have always been so different in the Eastern from the Western world, that it would appear as if a separate character had, from the very outset of their career, been imprinted by the finger of Providence on the various races of mankind. The descendants of Shem, the dwellers in the tents of the East, are still as widely separated from the descendants of Japhet, as when the superior vigour of the European race impressed upon the Roman poet the belief, that to their iron race alone it was given to struggle with the difficulties of humanity, and unfold the secrets of nature.* Their joys, equally with their sorrows,

* Audax Japeti genus
Ignem fraude malâ gentibus intulit.
Post ignem æthereâ domo
Subductum, macies et nova febrium
Terris incubuit cohors.
Nil mortalibus arduum est;
Cœlum ipsum petimus stultitiâ.

HORAT. *Carm.* lib. 1, ode 3.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

their virtues and their vices, their triumphs and their reverses, the sources of their prosperity and the causes of their ruin, are essentially distinct in these two quarters of the globe; while the peculiarities of the third great family of mankind are still so strongly marked, that there is no reason to believe that it will ever be able to emerge from a state of submission and servitude; and that the prophecy will hold good equally in the last as in the first ages of the world,—"God shall multiply Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."[1]

[1] Gen. ix. 27.

Constant submission to authority in the East.

Although civilisation has subsisted from the very earliest times in the Eastern nations, and the labours of man have there achieved prodigies of industry far surpassing any which have been reared by the efforts of the Western world; yet no disposition to resist authority, or assert independent privileges, has ever appeared, even in those situations where, from the assemblage of mankind together in great towns, the chief facilities might be supposed to have existed for the extrication of the democratic spirit. Revolts and civil wars innumerable have occurred, indeed, in every age of Asiatic story; but they have all been brought about either by the casual oppression of particular governors, or the hostility of rival candidates for the throne against each other. With the termination of this unbearable oppression, or the ascent of the throne by the successful competitor, all thoughts even of resistance have passed away from the minds of the people. The commercial cities of Asia Minor, which acquired republican ideas and resisted the authority of Darius, were all of European origin. No attempt to organize a system of popular resistance to encroachment, such as in every age of European

history, alike in ancient and modern times, has formed the great and deserving object of public effort, ever was thought of in the East. From the earliest times to the present moment the whole Oriental world have been strangers alike to the elastic vigour, the social progress and the democratic contentions of the European race. It is not sufficient to say that they submit now without a thought of resistance to the grossest oppression of their governors, or whomsoever is placed in authority over them. The idea of opposition has never crossed their minds: they have done so without a murmur from the days of Abraham.

Rapid progress of early civilisation in the East.

Owing to the prodigious fertility of their great alluvial plains, and the unbounded riches of nature which there spring up almost unbidden to the hand of the husbandman, the progress of opulence has always been much more rapid in the Eastern than in the Western world. In the great plain of Mesopotamia, one-half of which is composed of a natural terrace, sloping down with a gradual declivity from the Euphrates to the Tigris, and the other of a similar slope, inclining the other way, from the Tigris to the Euphrates,[1] the means of irrigation are provided, as it were, ready made by nature to the hand of man; and nothing is required on his part but to convey away into little channels the beneficent stream which, thus descending in perennial flow from the Armenian snows, affords the means of spreading continual verdure and fertility over a soil where vegetation ripens under the rays of a tropical sun. In the Delta of Egypt a level surface of great extent is annually submerged by the fertilizing floods of the Nile; and the principal difficulty of man is to clear out the prodigious luxuriance of vegetation which springs up from the solar warmth, when the waters of the river have first re-

[1] Gillies' Greece, v. 89.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

gained their natural channel. In the European fields, again, the productive powers of nature require to be drawn forth and assisted by years of human labour. The operations of draining, planting, and enclosing, which are essential to the improvement of agriculture, are the work of centuries; and the vast profits which in the East reward the first and infant efforts of human cultivation, are gained in the West only by the result of the accumulated labour of many successive generations. Agricultural riches, and consequent commercial opulence, spring up at once in the East with the rapidity and luxuriance of tropical vegetation: they are of slow and difficult growth in the West, like the oak and the pine, which arrive at maturity only after the lapse of ages.

Proportionate rapid growth of corruption.

But in proportion to the rapidity with which vegetation thus springs up under the genial warmth of an Eastern sun, is the fragile nature of the materials of which it is composed, and the seeds of rapid decay which are involved in the splendid structure. The law of nature seems to be of universal application—all that rapidly comes to maturity is subject to as speedy decay—whatever is destined for long duration is of the slowest growth, and of the most tardy development. The early prodigies of Oriental civilisation were of no longer duration, in the great year of human existence, than the first fruits of spring amidst the quickly succeeding harvests with which the labours of the natural year are crowned. The seeds of decay were sown with no unsparing hand: from the native corruption of the human heart, they found a soil richly prepared for their growth in the physical ease and natural blessings with which man was surrounded. As quickly as the bounties of nature gave him opulence, did his own weakness engender wicked-

ness; and the history of the East, from the earliest times, exhibits, in Gibbon's words, "the perpetual round of valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decline."

Provision made for its correction

If the extraordinary rapidity of the growth of wealth and civilisation in the Eastern plains is considered, and the rapid development of the germs of corruption in the human heart under the genial influence of prosperity, it not only will appear no way surprising that corruption and degeneracy should so speedily have spread in the Asiatic monarchies; but the only circumstance that will attract wonder is, how the human race has ever been able to extricate itself from the vice and weakness thus incident to the very first steps of its progress. It is more than doubtful, indeed, whether, in a state of society where the working classes are universally and invariably obedient, and no spring of improvement or purification is to be found in the efforts of the lower orders for their political elevation, or the struggles of the poor to better their condition, any means of correcting or removing the wide-spread corruption consequent on early prosperity could be found in the bosom of society itself. But these means are provided with unerring certainty in the physical conformation of the Asiatic continent, and the character which permanent causes have indelibly imprinted on the inhabitants of the greater part of that large portion of the globe.

In the energy of the Arabian and Tartar tribes.

It is only in particular districts of Asia, in the plain of Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Ganges, in the fertile fields of China, or in the alluvial beds of Asia Minor, that the natural riches and advantages are to be found which in every age have overspread the earth with the early prodigies of human industry. In by far the greater part of the Asiatic

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

continent the physical circumstances of mankind are widely different; and hardship and suffering have imprinted as bold and energetic a character upon the human mind, as ease and opulence have softened and relaxed it in situations blessed with greater natural advantages. The children of the desert are ever at hand to punish the vices and obliterate the corruptions of the cities of the plain. In the southern portions of Asia, in the vast peninsula of Arabia, a race of men have existed from the earliest times, on whom hardship and difficulty have eternally imprinted the same bold and daring qualities. Differing in no respect from their ancestor in the days of Abraham, the children of Ishmael are still to be found in the deserts of Arabia, poor, sober, and enduring; mounted on their steeds, or seated on their camels, in quest of a scanty subsistence, and preserving pure, on a rocky soil and under the rays of a vertical sun, the simplicity and the energy of patriarchal life: still, as in the days of Cyrus, the pastoral nations of the north wander over the vast table lands of Tartary, multiplying with the herds and flocks which graze around them, and possessing, even to profusion, that multitude of horses which in every age has constituted the strength of the Scythian tribes.* It is in the undecaying vigour and ceaseless multiplication of these nomade tribes, that the means of the continual renovation of the human race in the Asiatic empires has been provided. As certainly as the wealth of the plain produces corruption, the

* Among the Tartars to the north of the great range of the Caucasus, there is hardly an individual so poor as not to possess thirty or forty horses: the luxury of the great consists almost entirely in the number of these animals, which on these boundless grassy wilds cost nothing: and many of the chiefs possess three or four thousand steeds. —Malte Brun, vol. i., p. 172.

hardihood of the north engenders rapacity; and the corrupted monarchies of the East have, in every age, fallen before the daring rovers of the Scythian wilds, with the same certainty that the timid herds of inferior animals perpetually become the prey of the savage lords of the wilderness. The barbarian conquerors, when they settle in the opulent regions of civilisation, in the course of a few generations become as corrupted as the nations they have conquered; but, nevertheless, a certain impulse has been communicated to human vigour, and the extraordinary degeneracy of the seats of opulence purified, for a season at least, by the infusion of barbarian energy.

System of Oriental government, and descent of the throne.

The system of government in the East, from the earliest times, has been the same: we have no need to turn to modern travellers for a picture of the social system; it is to be found sketched out in the books of the Old Testament, and faithfully portrayed in the pages of Xenophon and Herodotus. Rank and authority are every where personal only: power is annexed to office, not to families; and depends for its establishment and continuance solely on the will of the sovereign. The throne itself is seldom found to follow the hereditary line of descent; the natural attachment of mankind to the families of their benefactors has commonly, for several generations, secured its continuance in the members of the family of a first founder of a dynasty; but no regular principle of succession has been followed, and the most energetic and audacious, whether of legitimate or illegitimate birth, has usually, without opposition, seized the diadem. The people, with that disposition to passive submission which in every age has characterised the inhabitants of Asia, submit without a murmur to a change of dynasty. The victor, gen-

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

erally in a single battle, is instantly saluted as sultan by all the satraps and cities of the empire; the stroke of fate is implicitly acquiesced in by all; and the descendants of a family which have enjoyed the throne for centuries, are consigned without regret to the obscurity from which they sprung, and speedily lost among the multitudes of humble life.

Precarious tenure of inferior authority.

The same instability and precarious tenure of power are to be found in a still greater degree among the inferior depositaries of authority. If the chances of victory, or the mutability of fortune, seat or unseat a dynasty on the throne, the favour of a sultan, the caprice of a minister, or the accidents of success, still more rapidly place or displace the rulers in the cities and the governors in the provinces. The changes of fortune, which from the earliest ages have existed in the East, appear incredible to those who have been accustomed to the more stable order of things in the Western world. The extraordinary adventures, the sudden elevations and as sudden depressions of human life portrayed in the Arabian Nights, are not the brilliant creations of Oriental fancy; they are the faithful picture of the continually occurring changes of fortune in the Eastern world. A barber may there any day become a vizier: a vizier, if he escapes the bowstring, may often esteem himself happy if he can become a barber. The education of all classes is the same; for this simple reason, that none can foresee with tolerable certainty any material difference in their destiny in life. Nothing is more common than to see, as chief ministers of the sultan, men who had formerly been trained to the humble duties of street porters: a shoemaker often becomes the high admiral of the Turkish fleet. The

descents from greatness are still more rapid than the ascent; wealth often attracts envy, and cupidity on the throne seldom fails to find pretexts for confiscating the riches which the oppression of subordinate functionaries had extorted from the cultivators of the soil. When the inevitable hour arrives, the victim of imperial cruelty or vengeance submits to the stroke of fate; the ruler of millions of subjects, the master of thousands of soldiers, quietly stretches out his neck to the bowstring: his exorbitant possessions, the object of so much envy, are confiscated to the treasury, or handed over to a more fortunate successor; and his children erelong are found labouring with their hands in the fields, carrying water in the streets, or bearing lances as private soldiers in the ranks of their father's successor.

Rapid growth and ephemeral duration of wealth and greatness.

Improvement, and the spread of opulence in Europe, are the slow growth of successive generations, each of which have added something to the national wealth, or gained something for the public rights. The virtues or the vices, the weakness or the energy, of the sovereign on the throne, though by no means unimportant elements in the national fortunes, seldom produce a decisive influence on the destinies of the state. The public tranquillity depends on the bravery and virtue of the higher ranks; the public opulence upon the industry and frugality of the lower. But in the East almost every thing turns upon the energy, the talents, and activity of the sovereign on the throne. If he is possessed of martial qualities and shining abilities, the fortunes of the state are speedily raised to the very highest point of elevation: if he is sunk in indolence, or lost in the pleasures of the harem, external disaster and internal

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

dilapidation as speedily ensue. The vigour of a great monarch wielding the despotic powers of government speedily makes itself felt in every department: order is maintained by the satraps and governors of provinces, each trembling for the preservation of his own authority; industry and property are protected among the poor; multitudes flock from the adjoining states, to share in the protection of vigour and justice; warriors crowd from all quarters to follow the standards of victory and plunder. Internal triumph, external success, thus rapidly accumulate round the empire of energy and courage; and the immense moveable or floating population of Asia, speedily causes an extraordinary influx of inhabitants into the principal cities of the empire. The whole history of the East, from the earliest ages, is composed of the successive elevations of dynasties or individuals by the efforts of the possessors of the throne, and their as uniform decline, and ultimate extinction, from the degeneracy and effeminacy of their unworthy successors.

Principles of vigour more powerful in the East than in Europe.

In Europe, alike in ancient and modern times, a great degree of stability has been communicated to the acquirements of civilisation, the conquests of power, and the accumulation of wealth; and although the progress of nations has been interrupted by casual vicissitudes of fortune, yet a long period of prosperity and greatness has been imparted to national existence, and its decline has been owing to a succession of causes which have gradually undermined, and at last dried up the sources of prosperity. But in the East a very different progress presents itself. The rise of power, the growth of civilisation, the marvels of opulence, have been far more rapid than in the Western world; but, on the other hand, the

catastrophes to which they have been subject have been much more rapid, the degeneracy by which they have been undermined, infinitely more swift in its progress. Though the voice of reason, matured by the lessons of experience, cannot as yet affirm that the European communities, with all their advantages of religion and knowledge, have eradicated from their bosom the seeds of mortality, it may with confidence be affirmed, that as they have been slower of growth, so they will be more durable in existence than the Oriental dynasties; and that the causes of decline, common to humanity, have been combated in the Western by far stronger principles of vigour and renovation than have ever appeared in the Eastern world.

And those of corruption also.

But, for the same reason, corruption, when it does spread through the vitals of the state, will be more deeply rooted in Europe than in Asia; and if degeneracy does overtake society in its last stages, it will be far more universal in the West than in the East. Nothing is so remarkable in the Asiatic states as the simplicity of manners and habits which prevails beyond the pale of those who actually enjoy the transitory wealth or power which are the consequence of the sultan's favour. That *they* speedily are corrupted by the possession of wealth, and that the descendants even of the bravest men become so utterly degenerate as to be incapable of contributing any thing to the defence of the state in a few generations, may be considered as decisively proved by every period of Asiatic history. But the great bulk of the people, as they share in none of the advantages of wealth and power, so they have at no period been generally affected by its corruptions. If a traveller enters an Asiatic town, he finds the manners of the

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

people and simplicity of domestic life nearly as they appear in the sacred records and the early narrative of Herodotus. In Europe, on the other hand, as political power and opulence have descended far more generally through all classes of society, and communicated in consequence, during the periods of public virtue, a far greater degree of durability and vigour to political prosperity; so the seeds of corruption, when they do spread, will be in proportion more generally diffused, and degeneracy, when it reaches the middle ranks, more universal and hopeless.

Ruinous effects of polygamy, which yet are confined almost entirely to the great.

Polygamy is and ever has been a dreadful evil in the East; and the extraordinary rapidity with which all races of conquerors have degenerated, in a few generations after their establishment in the conquered districts, has been doubtless mainly owing to this ruinous institution, which, among the great and affluent, poisons the sources of manhood and energy in the cradle. The Scythian conqueror himself was bred up amidst his herds and his flocks: wandering on horseback from morning till night, he acquired vigour from habit, and hardihood from necessity. His degenerate offspring, after his conquests were completed, bred up in the seclusion of the harem, surrounded by women, wealth, and flattery, sensual, capricious, and tyrannical, could hardly be recognised as the offspring of such a parent. But polygamy, with all its attendant train of ills—fawning eunuchs, fiery passions, luxurious seraglios, female jealousy, and sensual corruption—never has, and never can be a vice of the great body of the people. Necessity, the strongest of all laws, will, in every age and part of the world, confine men to a single wife: the cost of several, or a train of concubines, is so great, that, like a stud of hunters or race-horses in England,

it is altogether beyond the reach of the vast majority of mankind. By leading to the speedy corruption of the higher ranks, this ruinous institution may indeed, and always does, exercise a fatal influence on the *national* fortunes; but its effect on general manners, domestic purity, or the progress of population, is very inconsiderable. In none of these respects, perhaps, is it so powerful an instrument of corruption as the female profligacy and promiscuous concubinage, which, pervading all ranks, is felt as so consuming an evil in all the great cities of western Europe.

Causes of decay compensated by other circumstances.

As no protection, in any age or in any country of Asiatic history, has existed in the spirit of freedom which pervaded the middle or lower classes, or the bulwarks which they have constructed against the tyranny of the sovereign, human industry might have been almost destroyed, and the human race become wellnigh extinct in many of its most favoured regions, in consequence of the constant oppression of arbitrary power, or the periodical inroads of the Scythian cavalry, if it were not for three circumstances, eminently characteristic of eastern civilisation, which in every age have formed the principal sources of protection to Oriental industry.

The establishment of village communities.

1. The first of these is the institution of the village communities,* which has been already dwelt on in treating of the condition of the people in India, and which prevails generally throughout almost every part of the East. Society there appears in its very simplest form. A certain district around a village belongs in common to all its inhabitants. Some are devoted to the cultivation of the soil, and with their surplus produce maintain the other classes of the little society, among whom the different trades of blacksmiths,

* *Ante*, vii. 23.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

carpenters, bricklayers, masons, barbers, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and others, are divided; each member of which is bound in his own profession to contribute, sometimes by money, at others by a return in kind, to the wants of the other members of the community. The general tax, or rather tribute, which is imposed upon the whole, is levied by certain persons chosen by all the members, who allocate with great nicety the share of the burden upon each individual, charge themselves with its collection, and account for it to the pasha or other collector of the revenue. The attachment of the people to these little commonwealths is so strong as to be almost inextinguishable; if the members of it are dispersed by foreign violence, it is perpetuated from generation to generation: the ancient landmarks are preserved; even the sites of the different cottages are imprinted on their memories, and handed down to their children; and if happier times return, and the dispersed community or their descendants can re-assemble, they rebuild their fallen walls, and each family lights its fire as near as possible on the hearth of its ancestors. But if this village system operates as a protection to the community during prosperous, it comes to press often with dreadful severity in adverse times: the government will rarely, if ever, remit any thing of the fixed tribute from the community: the weight of the exaction thus often comes to fall upon declining numbers; and so grievous does the burden become when the members in the community are seriously impaired by sickness or the sword, that the remaining members fly to the desert or the mountains, and the entire depopulation of the country ensues. It is to this cause that both Gibbon and Sismondi[1] ascribe the rapid decline of population in the rural districts

[1] Gibbon, iii. 93, vii. 173, 174. Sismondi, iii. 232.

of the Roman empire; and the same circumstance is considered by recent observers as the cause of the rapid decrease of the population in the contemporary states of Turkey and Persia.

The azams elected to protect the people.

2. The next circumstance which has contributed to soften the weight of despotism in the East, is the institution of azams, and the corporate privileges which belong to the members of the different trades in the towns. The former of these are officers appointed by the people to watch over the interests of the cultivators, and shield them from the oppression of the pashas; the latter are the rights which members of the different trades in towns enjoy, and which interpose, between the individual and the oppression of the tax-collector, the important shield of a community having a common interest with himself. Where the azams do their duty they are frequently of essential service; and they have, in every age, delayed the ruin of many provinces. But they are often in league with the pashas, and are bribed by the wealth which his extortion has produced, to connive at still further enormities. The most effectual security, in consequence, is found to be the incorporating of trades in towns; and hence the observation so common in the East, that industry in the towns is much better protected than in the country, and that the numbers of their inhabitants are often stationary, or even increasing, amidst the desolation and ruin of the fields of the country.[1]

[1] Volney, ii. 87. Olivier, i. 201, 219.

Security of mountain fastnesses.

3. The principal protection of the rural population, in unsettled and disastrous times, is to be found in the security which mountain fastnesses have afforded to the industry of the people. Mountain ridges of prodigious height and vast extent run through the East in almost every direction. Independent of the

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

great stony girdles of the globe, the Caucasus and Himalaya, great numbers of considerable mountain ranges branch out from these huge chains in many different directions; and in their valleys the industry of the cultivators is comparatively undisturbed by the exactions of the pashas, or the plunder of the janissaries. Water, also, that indispensable requisite to cultivation over almost all the East, is generally to be had in comparative abundance from the mountain torrents of these alpine regions; and wherever it can be carried, the green field, the flowery orchard, and the smiling cottage, bespeak the residence of happy and industrious man. The rural population, accordingly, in many of the great mountain chains of the East—that of the Bulgarians among the wooded and thickly-peopled heights of the Balkan; of the Druses and Maronites on the terraced slopes, or beneath the alpine cliffs of Lebanon; and of the inhabitants of Mount Taurus, among the clear streams and beside the wooded valleys of Asia Minor—often exhibit a degree of general felicity to which hardly a parallel is to be found in any other part of the globe. The cavalry of the pashas is unable to penetrate these rocky dells or wooded recesses; the stern valour of the mountaineers guards the entrance to these asylums of industry and innocence; the demands of government are commuted into a fixed tribute from the state; land is almost always subdivided among the cultivators; and every man, on his little freehold, enjoys undisturbed the fruits of his toil.[1]

[1] Volney, ii. 218, 18, 74. Mariti, ii. 34.

Immense number and skill of the horsemen in the East.

The great strength of the East, in every age, has been found to consist in the multitude and admirable dexterity of its horsemen; and this arises from the number of nomade tribes, who, in almost all

Asiatic states, pervade every part of its territory; and who, constantly on horseback, have attained a proficiency in the care and management of that noble animal, unknown in any other part of the world. The number of these nomade tribes who pervade the Persian monarchy, is nearly a million; those in Asiatic Turkey are still more numerous.[1] Nor is the high estimation of horses confined to those who still adhere to the roving habits of their forefathers; it pervades the whole community, and descends to the very humblest and most indigent classes of the people. A beggar in Arabia, with his family, asks charity mounted on several horses; the luxury of the great consists in the number and high breeding of their stallions. The Tartar chiefs to the north of Persia have often three or four thousand horses for their private property; and the poorest man in their tribe is master of three or four. Uniting the blood of the Arab to the strength of the Tartar horse, these incomparable animals will convey their riders on a predatory excursion of a thousand miles in ten days, carrying with them their scanty provender for crossing the desert which separates them from civilized regions as they go forth, and bearing the ample spoil which their daring masters have amassed on their return.* The Asiatic lives with his horse; his children play with it from their mutual infancy; the attachment on both sides grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength; and when he has arrived at the full maturity of his powers, the noble Arab steed, endued almost with human sagacity, and fraught with more than human

[1] Malte Brun, ii. 301, ii. 107, 110.

* I had this extraordinary fact from my accomplished friend, Sir John M'Neil, so well known and distinguished in the eastern diplomacy of Great Britain.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

devotion, will die in the strenuous effort to save the playfellow of his infancy from captivity or death.*

Simplicity and purity of domestic manners.

If the purity of domestic manners be, as it undoubtedly is, the great source both of public grandeur and private happiness, a powerful antidote to the numerous evils by which they are oppressed has in every age been found from this cause in the East. Notwithstanding the immense superiority which Europe has long enjoyed from the energy of its character, the freedom of its institutions, and the superiority of its knowledge, it may be doubted whether the sacred fountain of domestic life has been preserved so pure among the poor and needy, as in

* A most moving incident, illustrative of the extraordinary strength as well as attachment of the Arab horses, is given by Lamartine in his beautiful Travels in the East.

"An Arab chief, with his tribe, had attacked in the night a caravan of Damas', and plundered it: when loaded with their spoil, however, the robbers were overtaken on their return by some horsemen of the Pasha of Acre, who killed several and bound the remainder with cords. In this state of bondage they brought one of the prisoners, named Abou el Marck, to Acre, and laid him, bound hand and foot, wounded as he was, at the entrance to their tent, as they slept during the night. Kept awake by the pain of his wounds, the Arab heard his horse's neigh at a little distance, and being desirous to stroke, for the last time, the companion of his life, he dragged himself, bound as he was, to his horse, which was picketed at a little distance. 'Poor friend,' said he, 'what will you do among the Turks? You will be shut up under the roof of a khan, with the horses of a pasha or an aga; no longer will the women and children of the tent bring you barley, camel's milk, or *dourra* in the hollow of their hand; no longer will you gallop free as the wind of Egypt in the desert; no longer will you cleave with your bosom the waters of the Jordan, which cool your sides, as pure as the foam of your lips. If I am to be a slave, at least may you go free. Go: return to our tent, which you know so well; tell my wife that Abou el Marck will return no more; but put your head still into the folds of the tent, and lick the hands of my beloved children." With these words, as his hands were tied, he undid with his teeth the fetters which held the courser bound, and set him at liberty; but the noble animal on recovering its freedom, instead of bounding away to the desert, bent its head over its master, and seeing him in fetters and on the ground, took his clothes gently in

the seclusion of the East. The unrestrained social intercourse of the sexes; the incessant activity which prevails; the close proximity in which the poor men and women in great cities are accumulated together; and the general license of manners which has flowed from the liberty that prevails, and the passion for ardent spirits which is so common among the working-classes, have produced a far greater degree of general vice and misery in Europe than has ever obtained, at least among the middle and lower classes, in the East. The enormous mass of female profligacy which overspreads almost all our great towns, is there almost unknown. From the seclusion of the harem have, in the middle classes,* flowed purer manners and a more elevated character than has resulted from the constant intermixture of the sexes, and the vehement passions to which it gives rise. It is this simplicity and honesty of disposition, joined to the unaffected devotion and martial qualities by which they are distinguished, which has blinded so many European travellers of the highest talents and discernment to the devastating effects of Asiatic government, and the ruinous consequences which have flowed, particularly during the

his teeth, lifted him up, and set off at full speed towards home. Without ever resting he made straight for the distant but well-known tent in the mountains of Arabia. He arrived there in safety, and laid his master safe down at the feet of his wife and children, and immediately dropped down dead with fatigue. The whole tribe mourned him; the poets celebrated his fidelity; and his name is still constantly in the mouths of the Arabs of Jericho."—LAMARTINE, *Voyage dans l'Orient*, vi. 236. Edin. 1836. This beautiful anecdote paints the manners and the horses of Arabia better than a thousand volumes. It is unnecessary to say, after it, that the Arabs are, and ever will be, the first horsemen, and have the finest race of horses in the world.

* The dreadful evils of polygamy among the rich and powerful, to whom, from its vast expense, it is almost entirely confined, have been already noticed. Among the middle classes it is rare; among the poor unknown.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

decline of the Persian and Turkish empires, from the weakened authority of the throne, the deplorable contests between the princes of the same family, and the general oppression which the pashas have exercised in the independent sovereignties which they have erected in many of the provinces of these vast empires. *

Immutable manners and customs of the Turks.

Encamped for four centuries in Europe, the Turks have deviated in no respect from the manners and customs of their Asiatic forefathers. Although from the day that the cannon of Mahomet the Second opened the breach in the walls of Constantinople, which still exists to attest the fall of the Emperor of the East, they have been the undisputed masters of the fairest and richest dominion upon earth, yet the great body of them still retain the primitive customs and habits which they brought with them from the mountains of Koordistan. They have in no degree either shared in the improvement, or adopted the manners, or acquired the knowledge, of their European neighbours. Their government is still the absolute rule of the sultans and the pashas, the agas and the janissaries; notwithstanding their close

* For the preceding account of the civilisation and manners of the East, the author has relied on the older travels of Olivier, Sonnini, Volney, Chardin, Eton, and De Tott, with the more modern narratives of Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Porter, Fraser, Morier, Walsh, Urquhart, and Slade. The particular references are in general not given on the margin, because they would cover it with too dense an array; and the authorities in the text are founded rather upon a comparison of their different accounts, and the conclusions which the author, after much reflection on the subject, has drawn from them, than from any particular passages which specially and to the letter support the statements which he has given. And he hopes that such a summary will not be deemed misplaced, even in a work of European history; the more especially, when the important questions now wound up with the policy of the East are considered, and the intimate connexion which the English nation, both from its national policy and the extent of its oriental dominions, has with the future destinies of that important portion of the globe.

proximity to, and constant intercourse with, the democratic commercial communities of modern Europe; they are yet the devout followers of Mahomet, notwithstanding that they every where admit that the star of the Crescent is waning before that of the Cross, they still adhere in all their institutions to the precepts of the Koran; they rely with implicit faith on the aid of the Prophet, although they are well aware that the followers of Christ are ultimately to expel them from Europe, and themselves point to the gate by which the Muscovite battalions are to enter when they place the Cross upon the dome of St Sophia.

The Mahometan religion is the cause of this tenacity.

A very sufficient reason may be assigned for this invariable adherence of the Turks to their Asiatic customs, notwithstanding their close proximity to European civilisation, and the innumerable evils which they have suffered from the superiority of the European discipline. Their RELIGION renders them incapable either of alteration or improvement. The Koran contains several admirable precepts of morality, drawn from the sages of antiquity, and many sublime truths borrowed from the Gospel; but in all the parts where it is original, it is either a wild rhapsody, inapplicable to the rest of the world, or a rude code suited to none but a horde of Oriental conquerors. Nevertheless, it forms not only the religious standard of faith, but the civil code of law: the whole decisions of the cadis in Mussulman states are founded on texts of the Koran; all the maxims of the muftis and supreme religious council are drawn, without comment or amplification, from its injunctions.[1] The celebrated saying of the Arabian conqueror who destroyed the Alexandrian library, "If these books contain the truth, it is already in the Koran, and therefore they are superfluous;

[1] Malte Brun, iv. 266, 267.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

if what they contain is not there, it is false, and therefore they should be destroyed," contains the whole system of their civil and ecclesiastical government.

Which must ever render all attempts at Turkish reform abortive.

Minutely specifying almost all the particulars of government, containing every possible direction for the regulation of the interests of society as it existed around the dwelling of Mahomet, and the cradle of his religion, it is necessarily inapplicable to a different state of society, where separate interests have arisen, and unforeseen passions and difficulties have emerged. All attempts, therefore, at the renovation or regeneration of the Turkish, as of every other Mahometan empire, must necessarily fail, because, before they can be generally adopted, the people must have ceased to be Mahometans; the priests must have ceased to be the expounders of the law; the sway of the sultan to be the delegated authority of Mahomet; the Koran to be the supreme code, in all matters, civil and religious, from which there is no appeal. This is, with a view to their respective political effects, the grand distinction between the Christian religion and that of Mahomet. Prescribing nothing for external form, enjoining little for ecclesiastical government, studiously avoiding all allusion to political institutions, the Gospel directs all its efforts to the purification of that great fountain of evil—the human heart. Destined in the end to effect powerful changes, both in the heart of man, the frame of society, and the powers of government, it aims directly at neither of the latter objects: it is to work out the destined end, to accomplish the ultimate designs of Providence, by its unobserved influence upon the human heart. The Koran, on the other hand, specifies *every* thing which its disciples are to do, from the division of property among chil-

dren upon the death of a parent, to the number of daily ablutions to be performed by the faithful. Reform of institutions, or change of manners, therefore, is impossible in a Mahometan state; for it can be attempted only at the hazard of destroying the great bond of nationality, Mahometanism itself. It is as impossible as for a child to grow to maturity who, in early youth, has been cased in a rigid suit of armour: his figure cannot enlarge unless his fetters are burst. The one faith proposes to reform the heart by the institutions; the other, to reform the institutions by the heart. Whoever will reflect on this distinction, cannot fail to perceive that the one Religion, calculated with extraordinary sagacity to produce a great impression, and in some respects improvement, among the Asiatic tribes for whom it was intended, was wholly unfit for the progressive destinies and different circumstances of mankind; while the other, though producing, in the outset, a less impression, from its enjoining no external ceremonial or outward institutions, was adapted for every imaginable state of human compression, and fitted to pour the stream of real regeneration into the human heart to the end of the world.

In the first instance the Mahometan religion wonderfully strengthened Turkey.

But although the Mahometan religion has thus opposed an invincible bar to the improvement of the Turkish empire, or the engrafting upon its aged stock of any part of the free institutions of Christian Europe, and rendered chimerical all the projects which have been formed in recent times for its political reformation; yet there can be no doubt that for several centuries after it was established in Europe, the extraordinary strength and formidable power of the Turkish empire were mainly owing to

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

the religious fervour with which its Asiatic inhabitants were inspired. Not only were the conquests of the Osmanlis effected during the fervour of a new faith, when the Arabians, with the scymitar in one hand and the Koran in the other, poured into all the adjoining states to seek the houris of Paradise in the forcible conversion of the world; but the religious veneration with which the family of the first founder of the empire was regarded, gave a degree of stability to its institutions which has never obtained elsewhere in the East. Alone of all the Oriental dynasties, the descendants of the same family have sat upon the throne for four hundred years; and although many irregularities in the choice of the princes and the order of descent have occurred, the throne has never been filled but by the descendants of Othman. In this way, the Turkish empire has been saved that perpetual recurrence of civil wars upon every accession, which has ruined the independence and halved the population of her immediate neighbours in Poland and Persia; and without the hereditary descent of the throne having been formally recognised, the Ottoman dominions have substantially obtained most of the benefits of that invaluable institution.

Extent and magnitude of the Turkish empire.

The provinces which fell to the Turks upon the overthrow of the Lower Empire were immense, and embraced perhaps the fairest portion and most delightful regions of the earth. It still extends, notwithstanding the great losses it has sustained in the last seventy years, to 815,000 square geographical miles—a surface about nine times that of the British islands, which contain 90,000. Although, however, the extent of its surface is so great, and the climate

so benign that the plains in general yield thirty or forty, in some places as much as two hundred fold;* although the mountains, cut in terraces, will yield fruits and crops to the height of several thousand feet above the sea—yet the population of the whole empire in Asia and Europe does not at the highest estimate exceed twenty-five, and by the lowest estimate is brought down to eight or nine millions: the largest of which number only gives twenty-eight souls to the square mile, while the lower will only yield nine; while Great Britain, with far inferior climate and natural advantages, contains two hundred and sixty. More decisive proof cannot be figured of the desolation practically produced by the Turkish government, or of the extent to which the most boundless gifts of nature may be rendered nugatory by the long-continued oppression of Oriental tyranny. In fact, it is only in the great towns and mountainous regions of the country that any considerable population is to be seen: its finest plains are nearly desolate; nine-tenths of the state of Mesopotamia, the garden of the world, capable itself of nourishing forty millions of souls, is a blowing desert; not a seventh of the rich alluvial soil in Wallachia or Moldavia is cultivated; and the wild grass of nature comes up to the horses' girths, from the gates of Constantinople to the mosques of Adrianople.[1]

[1] Malte Brun, ii. 166, 167.

Yet the world hardly afforded so noble a country as that which at this period was still desolated by the sway of the Osmanlis. Bounded by the Euphrates on the east, the Mediterranean or Lybian deserts on the south, the Adriatic on the west, and

Its boundless natural advantages.

* "In the plains of Mesopotamia, near Bagdad, the land, from the effects of irrigation, yields, under a very rude cultivation, *two hundred* fold."—Malte Brun, ii. 117.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

the steppes of the Ukraine on the north; containing the isles of Greece, the forests of Macedonia, the cedars of Lebanon, in its bosom; numbering the Nile, the Danube, and the Euphrates among its inland streams; embracing all the nations who fought at Troy among its subjects, all the realms which have enlightened the world among its provinces; giving law at once to Egypt and Jerusalem, to Nineveh and Babylon, to Athens and Constantinople; connected together by a vast inland sea, navigated by hardy and skilful seamen, enjoying hundreds of the finest harbours in the world on its shores; with the vine and the olive clothing its slopes, the orange and the citron loading its isles, the oak and the pine flourishing on its mountains, the maize and the rice waving on its plains;—it seemed to enjoy every advantage which the bounty of nature could accumulate, to bestow happiness and contentment on the human race. But all these blessings were blasted by the despotism of the East and the rigidity of the Mahometan rule: its noble plains were fast relapsing into deserts; its capacious harbours deserted; wild beasts were resuming their dominion amidst the ruins of former magnificence; population, amidst the rapid increase of the European states, was retrograding, and fears were entertained for the extinction of the human race in those realms of boundless riches where the species was first created.[1] *

[1] Malte Brun, ii. 117.

But amidst the general decay of the Turkish empire, the matchless situation and natural advantages

* Upwards of fifty years ago, fears were entertained of the entire extinction of the human race in the eastern provinces of the Turkish empire.—ETON'S *Turkish Empire*, 264. And the same fears are expressed by a more recent observer for some provinces of the western, particularly the plains of Roumelia, Wallachia, and Moldavia.—WALSH'S *Constantinople*, i. 193, 194, and BUCKINGHAM'S *Mesopotamia*, i. 212.

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

of CONSTANTINOPLE still attracted a vast concourse of inhabitants, and veiled under a robe of beauty the decline of the Queen of the East. This celebrated capital, the incomparable excellence of whose situation attracted the eagle eye of Alexander the Great, which made the Romans forget the sanctity of the Capitol, and transferred the metropolis of the world to the shores of the Bosphorus; which rent in twain the dominion of the legions, and yet singly sustained for a thousand years the empire of the East; which drew aside the crusaders from the storm of Jerusalem, and attracted the Osmanlis from their deserts to the shores of the Bosphorus; which threatened in one age every monarchy in Europe, and existed in another by their mutual jealousy at its acquisition—had long formed the real object of discord between the courts of Paris and St Petersburg. The desires of the cabinet of St Petersburg had been for above a century fixed on its acquisition; towards that object all their efforts had, since the days of Peter the Great, incessantly been directed, and it was only by the active interference of England that the total overthrow of the Turkish empire had been averted, on the eve of the revolutionary war, after the fall of Oczakoff.* So firmly bent was the Empress Catharine on this splendid acquisition, that she named her eldest grandson Alexander, and his second brother Constantine; hoping that the former would rival the glories of the Macedonian conqueror, and the latter again renew on the Bosphorus the empire of the cross and the lustre of the Eastern empire. During the anxieties and dangers of that dreadful contest, the designs of the cabinet of St Petersburg for the acquisition of Constantinople had for a time been suspended; but

Incomparable advantages and beauty of Constantinople, and designs of Russia upon it.

* *Ante*, i. 382.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

its projects, guided by aristocratic foresight, were never forgotten: even while still reeking with the blood of Friedland, Alexander turned his anxious attention to the long-cherished projects of his family and court; and Napoleon, bent on the acquisition of Spain for himself, gave a verbal consent during the conference of Tilsit, to the entire expulsion of the Turks from Europe by the Russians.* But Roumelia and Constantinople were excluded from this partition, and their destination left in the dark, even when it was agreed that the Osmanlis should be expelled from all their other possessions in Europe. Napoleon, as he himself has told us, never could bring his mind to consent to the cession of the Queen of the East to his northern rival: it soon afterwards, as will immediately appear, formed the subject of angry contention between them. Combined with jealousy concerning Poland, and the strict observance by Russia of the continental system, it formed the secret cause of the Russian invasion; and one principal reason which directed the mighty conqueror to Moscow instead of St Petersburg, was the secret project which he entertained of turning his victorious arms, after the subjugation of the Muscovites, to the southward, and placing on his victorious brows the diadem of the Eastern empire.'† [1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 234.

It is not surprising that Constantinople should thus in every age have formed the chief object of human ambition. Placed midway between Europe

* *Ante*, vi. 314.

† Napoleon's designs on Constantinople were of very old standing, and had constantly occupied his mind since the treaty of Tilsit. Shortly after that peace, when one of the chief persons in his councils spoke on the subject of a general peace, he replied, with a frankness very unusual to him, "A general peace! it will be found only at Constantinople." CHAMBRAY, ii. 235.

and Asia, it is at once the natural emporium where the productions of the east and west find their obvious point of contact, and the midway station where the internal water-communication of Europe, Asia, and Africa find their common centre: while the waves of the Mediterranean and the Ægean bring to its harbour the whole productions of Egypt, Lybia, Italy, and Spain, the waters of the Danube, the Dneister, and the Wolga, waft to the same favoured spot the agricultural riches of Hungary, Germany, the Ukraine, and Russia. The caravans of the desert, the rich loads of the camel and the dromedary, meet within its walls; the ample sails and boundless riches of European commerce—even the distant pendants of America and the New World—hasten to its quays to convey the vast productions of the Old to the New Hemisphere. An incomparable harbour, where a three-decker can without danger touch the quay, and from the yard-arms of which a bold assailant may almost leap on the walls, affords, within a deep bay several miles in length, ample room for all the fleets in the universe to lie in safety: a broad inland sea, inclosed within impregnable gates, gives its navy the extraordinary advantage of a safe place for pacific exercise and preparation; narrow and winding straits on either side, of fifteen or twenty miles in length, crowned by heights forming natural castles, render this matchless metropolis impregnable to all but land forces. It is the only capital in the world, perhaps, which can never decline as long as the human race endures, or the present wants of mankind continue; for the more that the west increases in population and splendour, the greater will be the traffic which must pass through its gates in conveying to the inhabitants of its empires the rich products of the

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

eastern sun; and the more that Asia revives or Russia advances in civilisation, the more boundless must be the wealth which will be poured into its bosom from the vast arteries which collect from their plains the boundless streams of eastern cultivation.

Description of Constantinople itself.

Nor are the beauty of Constantinople and the natural excellence of its situation inferior to the commercial advantages which, for a thousand years, prolonged the existence of the Byzantine, and now singly compensate the decay of the Turkish empire. The powers of the greatest historical and descriptive painters of England and France, have hardly sufficed to portray its varied charms; and if the pencils of Gibbon and Lamartine have, in it, found materials to crowd successive chapters of their immortal works, a subsequent writer can hardly be expected to do justice to it in a single paragraph. Situated, like Rome and Moscow, on seven hills, but enjoying, unlike them, the advantages of a maritime situation and the refreshing breezes of the ocean—exhibiting in its successive terraces, which rise from the margin of the water, an unique assemblage of European domes, green foliage, and eastern minarets; with the noble harbour of the Golden Horn, five miles in length, and yet capable of having its mouth closed by a single chain, thick-set with all the sails of Europe, lying in its bosom; and the blue expanse of the Sea of Marmora, studded with white sails and light barques, opening in its front—it presents an assemblage of striking points, unparalleled in any other quarter of the globe. But great as is the lustre of the capital, it is outdone to the real lover of the beauties of nature, by the extraordinary variety and richness of the scenery in the channel of the Bosphorus, where the stream which unites the Euxine to the Sea of Marmora winds its devious course for

nearly twenty miles through bold headlands and lofty promontories; one shore of which, resplendent with the smiling villas, umbrageous woods, and hanging gardens of the East, falls so rapidly into the sea, that the acacia dips its branches in the wave, and the sails of the largest merchantmen almost touch the dark green cypresses that crowd the shore: while, on the opposite coast, the features bear the character of savage magnificence; where the villages bespeak the wildness of Oriental manners, and the havens the spontaneous bounty of nature; and where a seventy-four can lie in safety at the foot of the rocks, moored to the root of the lofty evergreen oak, whose branches intermingle with its masts.[1]

[1] Lamartine, Gibbon, Slade.

Admirable cavalry of the Turks.

The principal strength of the Turks, like that of all other Asiatic nations, has always consisted in their cavalry; and no nation ever was better provided with light horse. Independent of the nomade tribes of Asia, which, as already mentioned, penetrate its eastern provinces in every direction, the European Mussulman proprietors, who hold their land under the tenure of military service as spahis, furnish at all times a powerful body of admirable cavaliers. Every Turk, and, in fact, almost every Orientalist, is by nature a horseman. From their earliest infancy they are accustomed to the saddle; from childhood upwards their horses are their companions; in youth, their principal exploits and rivalry consist in the management of their steeds; and in maturer years, all their journeys are performed on horseback. Beyond the distance of a few miles from some of their great towns, there is no such thing as a carriage-way in any part of Turkey. Even the ladies of the harems perform their distant journeys in this manner, or on baskets

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

slung on each side of camels; and in the management of the rein and the firmness of their seat, often rival the most accomplished horsemen of Western Europe.[1]

[1] Valentine, Guerre des Turcs, 12, 13.

The Spahis.

There are great varieties, however, in the quality of the Turkish horse; and none are comparable in dexterity and equipment to the spahis, who inhabit the broad and wooded Mount Hæmus. These horsemen are almost all proprietors of the ground, or their sons; and they hold their land by the tenure of military service, when called on by the Grand Seignior. Accustomed from their infancy to climb the wooded declivities of their native hills, they early acquire an extraordinary skill and hardihood in horsemanship. A spahi will often ride at full gallop up and down hills, over torrents, through thick woods, along the edge of precipices, or where an European horseman would hardly venture even to walk. This extraordinary boldness increases when they act together in masses. When so assembled, they dash down rocks, and drive through brushwood in the most surprising manner. No obstacles intimidate, no difficulties deter, no disorder alarms them. The attacks of such bodies are in an especial manner to be dreaded in rugged or broken ground, where European infantry deem it impossible for cavalry to act at all. The heads of two or three horsemen are first seen peeping up through the brushwood, or emerging out of the steep ravines by which the declivities are furrowed, woe to the battalion or division that does not instantly stand to its arms, or form square on such videttes appearing. In an instant, five hundred or a thousand horsemen scale the rocks on all sides; with loud cries they gallop forward upon their enemy; the Turkish scymitar is

before their horses' heads, and in a few minutes a whole regiment is cut to pieces.[1]

Although, however, the Turkish horse constitutes the main strength of their armies, yet they have the command of a very numerous body of foot soldiers. These originally consisted of the military feudatories, who held their land for service in war, just as the feudal tenants of Christian Europe. They constituted the main strength of the Ottoman armies in their best days, and their number was variously estimated at from sixty thousand to one hundred thousand men. But a new method of recruiting the foot service was adopted by Amurath the First, who selected a fifth part of the most robust of the prisoners of the Christian nations, whom he compelled to adopt the Mahometan faith, and from whom, or their sons, he formed a new body of troops called the Yenetcheræ or Janissaries, who soon acquired an extraordinary celebrity in the wars with the Christian powers. Their discipline and mode of fighting was very similar to the English light infantry or French tirailleurs. From being constantly embodied, they soon acquired a high degree of perfection and discipline; and at a time when no other power in Europe had a similar force to oppose to them, they were wellnigh irresistible. At the siege of Malta, under Solyman the Magnificent, during the reign of Charles the Fifth, and in the repeated invasions of Hungary which took place in that time, till the siege of Vienna in 1683, they were the terror of all Christendom. This favoured body soon came to enjoy so many privileges, and so much consideration, particularly from the privilege of setting up a trade in any town, that great numbers of persons in all parts of the empire enrolled themselves

[1] Veterani Campagne, 34. Valentini, 12.

Their feudal militia and janissaries.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

under their banners. Their whole number throughout the empire might amount, at the treaty of Tilsit, to one hundred thousand persons, of whom eighteen or twenty thousand were to be found in Constantinople or the adjoining villages. Not more than a third of this number, however, were permanently embodied, except on a particular crisis; but they were all liable to be called on when the service of the state required it; and sixty or seventy thousand excellent soldiers could in this way be arrayed round the standards of the Prophet.[1]

[1] Malte Brun, ii. 138, 184. Valentini, 14, 15.

And fellahs, or ordinary footsoldiers

In addition to these regular forces of feudal militia, the Grand Seignior was entitled at any time to call upon the whole Mahometan population in his dominions capable of bearing arms; and although such an array, often hastily brought together, and always undisciplined, would not in any European nation have been formidable, yet it was by no means to be despised, from the peculiar habits of the Ottomans. From the troubled state of the country, and the great pride which they take in costly weapons, every Turk is accustomed to the use of arms. They are all, perhaps, adepts in the use of the gun, the pistol, the scymitar, and the lance. Being almost all either sturdy cultivators or hardy cavaliers, they are equally ready for the foot or the horse service; and what was wholly unknown in any other army, an officer might, with perfect security, at any time put a janissary on horseback, or enroll a spahi among the companies of foot soldiers. The Turkish artillery was long superior to that of the European powers; and although it had not kept pace with the progress of western science, and had sunk from its former celebrity during the wars of the eighteenth century, yet it was still formidable from the great

number of guns which their armies brought into battle, and the rapidity with which their admirable horses moved them from one part of the field to another.[1] CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

An empire possessing military resources of this description, while animated by the spirit of religious zeal, and held together by the bond of successful plunder, was a most formidable object of apprehension to the Christian powers; and on many occasions it was only by the most strenuous efforts, and union of the Western powers that could hardly have been expected, that Christendom was saved from Mahometan subjugation. But religious zeal, and the lust of conquest, though two of the most powerful passions which can rouse the human breast, cannot be relied on for permanent efforts. The first generally burns so fiercely that it extinguishes itself after a few generations; the second, dependent on the excitement of worldly desires, is kept alive almost entirely by the continuance of worldly success. The vicious institutions and wasting tyranny of the Turkish empire, were incapable of furnishing that steady support to military power which arose from the hereditary aristocracy and free spirit of Western Europe. The Christians had at first the utmost difficulty in stemming the torrent of Asiatic invasion; and the destinies of the world never, perhaps, hung in so nice a balance as when Charles conquered the Saracens on the field of Tours, or when John Sobieski raised the siege of Vienna with the Polish lances. But these two memorable battles, by stopping the career of conquest, and cooling the ardour of fanaticism in their ranks, proved fatal to their cause both in Western and Eastern Europe. Disaster never ceased to succeed disaster, till, though after the lapse of many centuries, the arms of the Moors were forced

[1] Val. 13, 14.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

backward from the banks of the Loire across the Straits of Gibraltar; and the jealousy of the European powers, excited by the inestimable prize of Constantinople, alone has prevented them, long before this time, from driving the Turks across the Bosphorus into their native seats in the deserts of Asia.

Varied population of which this empire is composed.

During the decline of the Ottoman empire, which has now continued to recede for a hundred and fifty years, they have, however, maintained many long and bloody wars both with the Austrians and Russians; and the tenacity with which they still hold their territory, and the vigour with which they have so often risen from shocks which seemed fatal to their cause, prove what powerful elements of strength exist in the courage and energy of the Turkish population to resist so many external disasters, and the more unobserved but fatal influence of such long-continued internal oppression. This tenacity of life is the more remarkable when it is recollected that every where three-fifths, in most two-thirds, of the whole population of the empire are Christians; and that nations and sects of all imaginable varieties compose the motley array of the inferior classes of the Ottoman empire. The merchants are almost all Greeks or Armenians; the sailors, islanders from the Archipelago; the money-lenders, Jews; the watermen and cultivators, generally the descendants of the inhabitants of the old Greek empire. Three millions of Turks in Europe, and perhaps four millions in their Asiatic dominions, not more than a third of the whole inhabitants, not only retain all this varied population in entire subjection, but compel them to fight in their ranks, to labour for their support, and to pay taxes to their government;[1] a fact which, however surprising, is thrown into the shade by the

[1] Malte-Brun, ii. 137.

still more wonderful sway maintained by a much smaller number of British over the immense population of the Indian peninsula. 1808.

Turkish fortresses.

The fortresses of Turkey are far from being worthy of respect, if the construction of their ramparts is alone taken into consideration; but they become most formidable strongholds from the manner in which they are defended by the Mussulman population. They have no idea of bastions or covered ways, nor of one rampart enfilading another, nor of the system of outworks, which form the strength of modern fortifications. Brahilow, Widdin, and Belgrade, which possess these advantages, have all owed them to the Christian powers which, at different times, have had them in their hands. The real Turkish fortresses, such as Silistria and Roudschouck, on the Danube, are merely surrounded by a lofty wall, in front of which runs a deep ditch. Here and there a few round towers or bastions form so many salient angles, but they are of no other use than to mount a few cannon. On the top of the wall is placed a row of gabions, with embrasures for cannon, behind which the besieged are completely screened from the fire both of artillery and musketry; and at short distances are loopholed guard-houses, from which they keep up a destructive fire on the assailants. Subterraneous passages are worked under the ramparts, by which they are enabled to fill the lower part of the ditch above the water with musketeers, who often prove extremely fatal on an assault. The strength of the Turkish fortifications, therefore, does not consist in the solidity of the works, or their scientific construction;[1] but the obstinacy of the defence often renders them more formidable[63].

[1] Val. 62,

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

obstacles than the most regular ramparts of Western Europe.

A very sufficient reason may be assigned for the resolute manner in which the Ottomans defend their walls: it is necessity. The Grand Seignior makes no distinction between misfortune and pusillanimity. The bowstring in general awaits alike the victim of superior power and the betrayer of patriotic duty; and such is the inveteracy with which war has long been carried on between the Mussulman and Christian powers, that all the inhabitants are well aware that death or captivity awaits them if the town is carried by assault, or even surrendered by capitulation, and that their only chance of safety is in the most resolute resistance. Thirty thousand persons, of whom one-half were the inhabitants of the town, perished in the assault of Ismael in 1789, and fifteen thousand were made prisoners, and for the most part sold as slaves, or transported into the country of the conqueror. Thus the terrible maxim of ancient war, *Væ victis*, is constantly before the eyes alike of the citizens as the garrisons of Turkish fortified towns; and as the calamity involves persons alike of all religions who are found within the devoted walls, it unites all persuasions, Christians, Jews, and Mussulmen, in one common and cordial league against their ruthless assailants.[1]

[1] Val. 63, 65.

Desperate Turkish defence of the breaches of fortified towns.

The assault of the rampart is considered in Western Europe as the general termination of a siege; many brave commanders have deemed their duty sufficiently discharged, when they held out till the breach was practicable; and even the more rigorous code of military duty established by Napoleon, only required one assault to be withstood. In Turkey,

on the other hand, the mounting of the breach is but the beginning of the serious part of the defence. The Turks seldom disquiet themselves about retarding the approaches of the besiegers; frequently do not return a shot to the breaching batteries; let the ruined part of the rampart take its chance; but lend their whole efforts to the preparation of the means of defence against the assaulting columns who get in by that entrance. For this purpose, every ledge, roof, window, and wall which bears upon the approach to the breach, or the space inside of it behind the rampart, is lined with musketeers, and columns are arranged on either side of the opening within the wall, to assail the enemy when, disordered by the tumult of success, he has descended into the interior of the place. In the deadly strife which then ensues, the superior equipments and skill in the use of arms of the Turks, generally prove superior to the discipline of the Europeans: in personal contests, the bayonet is no match for the scymitar, at least when wielded by the janissaries. Every Turk, besides his musket and bayonet, has a pair of pistols, a scymitar, and slightly-curved poniard, two feet long, of fearful efficacy in combats hand-to-hand: and they have all been accustomed almost daily to the use of these arms from their infancy. It may readily be conceived that when the Christian columns, out of breath and disordered by the rush and ascent of the breach, find themselves suddenly assailed in front and on both flanks by such antagonists, it is seldom indeed that they can come off victorious; and in fact it would never happen, were it not that the Ottomans, though constitutionally brave, are sometimes seized with unaccountable panics, which lead them to take to flight at a time when the means of victory are still in their power.[1]

[1] Vol. 62, 63.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

The long-established and often-experienced superiority of the Ottoman cavalry, early led to a very peculiar organization and array of the Russian armies by whom they were to be opposed—squares of infantry were soon found to be the only effectual mode of resisting the attacks of that fiery and redoubtable horse, and for a considerable time their squares consisted of the whole army, which was drawn up in one solid column, like the corps of Korsakow, at Zurich, in 1799.* It was, in a great degree, owing to this defective organization that Peter the Great was reduced to such extremities on the Pruth in the early part of the eighteenth century. But it was at length discovered that the greater part of the Christian host was, under such an arrangement, kept in crowded ranks, in a state of perfect inefficiency; and, therefore, the more eligible plan was adopted of forming lesser squares, none of which were composed of more than twelve battalions. These squares had their artillery at the corners, the officers were in the centre, the cavalry outside, but ready to be withdrawn into the interior if necessary; and the masses were placed at such distances, in an angular manner towards each other, that the enemy's horse were generally exposed, on penetrating between them, to a fire on each flank: just as the Mamelukes were, by a similar arrangement on Napoleon's part, at the battle of the Pyramids. At the battle of Kagul, in 1770, the Russians had five of these squares; and at the affair of Schumla, on the 30th June 1774, Romanzoff advanced to the attack of the Turks in the same formation.[1]

Mode of warfare by the Russians against the Turks.

[1] Bounhord, 72. Val. 18, 20.

More recently, however, and since discipline has so much improved in the Muscovite ranks, the ordinary system is to advance, like other troops, in open co-

* *Ante*, iv. 137.

lumns, from whence it is easy to form squares, when the enemy are at hand. The constant habit of combating in this manner, and of looking for safety, not to flight, which would be utterly vain before the Turkish cavalry, but to the strength of their squares, has contributed in no small degree to the remarkable steadiness of the Russian infantry: while, on the other hand, the extreme ease with which they can always make their escape on their admirable horses, has increased the natural disposition of the Asiatic people to desultory warfare, and imprinted that tendency to dissolve after any considerable disaster, which, more or less, belongs to all but regular troops, and justified the saying of the old Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, who, with Suwarrow, defeated them so severely in 1789, that whenever he had once given the Turks a good beating, he felt no disquietude about them for the remainder of the campaign.[1]

The present tactics of the Russians in the Turkish wars.

[1] Val. 26, 28. Jom. Guerres de la Revol. i. 236.

The Turkish method of fighting exactly resembles that of the ancients; and a battle with them recalls to us those actions between the Romans and Asiatics of which Livy and Polybius have left such graphic descriptions. They constantly fortify their camps; and, when the day of battle arrives, draw out their forces in regular array in front of their intrenchments, where their stores, tents, ammunition, and riches are deposited. When the combat begins, they pour down with loud cries and extreme impetuosity, often on three sides at once of the squares of their enemy; the whole plain is covered with their horsemen; while their numerous guns endeavour to shake the enemy's array; and it requires no small steadiness, even in veteran troops, to withstand the charge. In close or single combat, whether in the field or in the breach, the European bayonet has never proved a

Turkish mode of fight.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

match for the Turkish scymitar; and no other nation is likely to find it more efficacious, when it failed in the hands of the French grenadiers in the breach of Acre, and of the Russian infantry on the glacis of Schumla.* Generally speaking, accordingly, the Russian horse seek safety within the squares of their infantry. Often the Turkish cavaliers, half-drunk with opium, pierce even the most solid squares; and instances are not awanting of their having, amidst the smoke and the strife, gone right through, and escaped on the opposite side without knowing where they had been. But if the first onset fails, as is often the case, the strength of the Ottomans, like the spring of a wild beast, is broken; it is no easy matter to make them rally for continued efforts; and if fortune proves in the end adverse, the vast array frequently disperses—every man returns to his home by the shortest road—the intrenched camp, with the whole stores and artillery of the army, is carried by storm; and the Vizier, who had a few days before been at the head of a hundred and fifty thousand men, is sometimes scarcely able to collect ten thousand round the standards of the Prophet.[1]

[1] Vol. 9, 11, 26. Jomini, Art de la Guerre, ii. 590, 591.

Great effect of the conquest of the nomade nations by the Russians.

The bloody war from 1736 to 1739, in which Marshal Munich bore so distinguished a part, and which more than repaired the disasters of the Pruth, contributed, in an essential manner, to weaken the Turkish military power, by withdrawing from their dominion, and arraying definitively under the Russian banners, the Cossack and nomade tribes who, in former wars, had proved such formidable antagonists to their

* Fifteen thousand Muscovites there perished under the Turkish scymitar; and the Vizier wrote to the Grand Seignior, that so numerous were the heads taken off the Infidel, that they would make a bridge from earth to heaven.

arms. Since that time the Muscovite battalions no longer invade the Ottoman plains, trusting to their squares of foot alone, and painfully toiling, like the legions of Crassus in ancient, or those of Peter the Great in modern times, in the midst of never-ceasing clouds of Asiatic horse: the lances of the Cossacks are seen on their side—the nomade tribes wheel round their masses; and although their little hardy ponies are no match in the shock of a charge for the superb steeds of the Osmanlis, and the lance, even in the bravest hands, can hardly ward off the keen edge of the Damascus scymitar—yet, in performing the duty of light troops, and scouring the country for provisions, they are decidedly their superiors. No Turkish army can now contend with the agility and address at the outposts of the Cossack horsemen; and the fate of Peter the Great, on the banks of the Pruth—that of being starved out by clouds of light horse—would now perhaps befall the Turkish army which should venture to trust itself in the open plains in their presence.[1]

[1] Val. 18, 19. Von Hammer, xix. 24, 27.

Importance of the unhealthiness of the plain of the Danube in the wars with the Russians.

Such has been the importance of this change, and of the increasing strength of the Russian and decline of the Ottoman power, that the Balkan must have been crossed, and Constantinople taken long before this time, had it not been for another circumstance which, for more than half a century, has prolonged the existence of the Turkish empire. This is the desert and pestilential nature of the vast plains forming the lower part of the basin of the Danube, which have always formed the theatre of war between them and the Christian powers. The flat parts of Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as of northern Bulgaria, five-sixths of which, from the devastation of long-continued war, and the ceaseless oppres-

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

sion of the Turks, are in a state of nature,[1] are exceedingly unhealthy in the autumnal months. Their low situation exposes them to frequent inundation and deluges of wet in the winter and early part of the season, which the great heats and long drought of summer dry up, and render the source of marsh *miasmata* of the most fatal kind in the close of the season. At this time vegetation is withered; the pasture for the cavalry disappears; the earth, parched and hardened, cracks in several places, and pestilential effluvia spread with the exhalations drawn up from the dried pools by the burning sun. Upon the German troops, in particular, this malaria generally proved so fatal, that it cut off more than half their numbers in every campaign; and though upon the Russian constitution it was somewhat less destructive, yet it never failed to occasion greater ravages than the sword of the enemy. If these provinces were traversed by roads passable for wheel carriages, it would be an easy matter to reach the foot of the Balkan range from the Russian frontier while the plains are still healthy, and the yet green herbage afford ample pasturage for the horses; but the difficulty of dragging the artillery and waggons over several hundred miles of uncultivated plains, where there are no roads, and provisions are so scanty that the army must bring its whole supplies within itself, is such, that it is hardly possible to reach the northern face of the mountains before the great heats have commenced; and when this is done the strength of Schumla and the courage of the inhabitants of the Balkan, have hitherto always arrested the invaders till the pestilential gales of autumn obliged them to retire. Thus, in its last stage of decrepitude, Turkey has derived safety from the effects of its own

[1] Malte Brun, vi. 232, 238.

devastations; and, secure behind the desert which itself has made, has found that security in the desolation which it probably would not have done from the prosperity of its empire.[1] CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

[1] Val. 14, 34, 40. Jomini, Art. de la Guerre.

The only artificial barrier, in a military point of view, which Turkey possessed on its northern frontier, was the line of the Danube, on which several fortresses stood, which, if the Ottomans had possessed the military skill of the French, would have rendered it as impervious as the Rhine to hostile invasion. Brahilow, Giurgevo, Silistria, Roudschouck, Hirsova, and Widdin, besides several others of less note, constituted this formidable line of defence; and though their fortifications would not bear a comparison with the works of Vauban and Cohorn, yet, manned by Turkish garrisons, and defended by the dagger and the scymitar, they constituted a most effectual barrier. An invading army from the north found itself compelled to secure one or more of these barrier fortresses before it ventured to cross the Danube; the desperate defence of the Janissaries and inhabitants prolonged, in almost every instance, the siege for some months, and meanwhile the season of spring and the early part of summer had passed; the Mussulman proprietors had assembled in the great intrenched camp of Schumla; the Balkan bristled with daring cavaliers; and the invading army, after it had effected with toil and bloodshed its conquest of the guardian fortress of the Danube, found itself doomed to traverse several hundred miles of open waterless plains teeming with pestilential exhalations, only to see its numbers melt in inglorious warfare at the foot of the great mountain barrier of Constantinople.[2]

Importance of the fortresses on the Danube.

No defence against Russia could be maintained in Wallachia or Moldavia but one.

[2] Val. 48, 57. Jom. iii. 86, 387.

War is the natural state between the Muscovites

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

State of Turkey at the opening of the war with the Russians in 1807.

and the Turks: the intervals of peace are only truces. The slightest cause can at any time blow up the slumbering embers into a conflagration; and if pretexts are wanting, the radical and paramount duty of destroying the Infidel is a sufficient reason when it seems expedient for renewing hostilities. In the present instance, however, it was not the interest, as it certainly was not the wish, of the Turks, to continue hostilities, when they had been deserted by Napoleon after the conclusion of the treaty of Tilsit. They had been involved in the contest in consequence of the dispute about the appointment of the hospodars or governors of Wallachia and Moldavia, of which an account has already been given, and the impolitic invasion, by the Russian armies under General Michelson, in autumn 1806, on the eve of the war between Prussia and France,* and the still more injudicious and calamitous attack by the English on Egypt in spring 1807, which, without weakening their power, increased their irritation.† It has been already mentioned that the Turks, who at that period were weakened by the revolt both of the Pasha of Widdin, a strong place on the Danube, and Czerny George, the far-famed Pasha of Servia, who had succeeded in erecting an independent principality in that province, where he was at the head of fifty thousand men, were unable to withstand the invasion of forty thousand Russian troops on the plains of Moldavia and Wallachia; and that, accordingly, they abandoned entirely these provinces to the enemy, and prepared only to defend the line of the Danube, the fortresses of which they put in a good state of defence.'‡

Nov. 23, 1806. April 22, 1807.

[1] Val. 42.

War was formally declared by Russia against

* *Ante*, v. 157, 163. † *Ante*, v. 176. ‡ *Ante*, v. 162, 163.

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

Turkey in January 1807; and although the bold and well conceived, but ill executed expedition of Sir John Duckworth against Constantinople, had a powerful effect in rousing the Mahometan spirit in the empire, yet a tragical event which soon after ensued, seemed again to prostrate its reviving strength, and expose it all but defenceless to the blows of its inveterate enemy. Sultaun Selim, an amiable and well-informed young man, had become sensible of the inveterate weakness of the Ottoman empire, and, like his more vigorous and undaunted successsor, he conceived that the true remedy for these evils, and the only means of maintaining the independence of Turkey in the European commonwealth, was by gradually ingrafting on its inhabitants both the civil and military institutions of Christendom. These attempts, hazardous in some degree in all old established countries, were in an especial manner to be dreaded in Turkey, from the political influence, as well as military power, of the numerous body of janissaries, who had contrived to engross almost all the official situations of consequence in the state. What in the first instance excited their jealousy was the corps of *Nizam-Genittes*, or new troops, who were disciplined in the European method, and lodged in the principal barracks of Constantinople. They were intended, as they were well aware, to form the nucleus of a military force adequate to curb, and perhaps in the end punish, their excesses. The entrusting the forts of the Bosphorus, the gates of the capital, to these young troops, in an especial manner excited their jealousy. Emissaries from the janissary corps, unknown to the sultaun, mingled in their ranks; the powerful body of the ulemas, or priesthood, began to preach insurrection

Revolution at Constantinople.

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

upon the ground of the sultaun aiming at the overthrow of the fundamental institutions of the Koran and the empire; and a wide-spread conspiracy was formed among the disaffected, for the destruction of the reforming sultaun and his confidential minister, Mahmoud.[1]

[1] Dumas, Pr. His. xix. 110, 111. Jom. ii. 430, 431.

Dethronement of Sultaun Selim, and accession of Mustapha.

Mahmoud was the first victim. A well-concerted conspiracy among the guards of the forts of the Bosphorus, some of whom had been won over by the janissaries, proved fatal to that minister. He was assailed by some perfidious yamacks at the moment when he ordered them to put on the uniform of the new troops, which they had declared their willingness to do; and though the sultaun's faithful guards rescued him from their hands, it was only to meet death on the Asiatic coast, at Buyukdere, when he disembarked from a boat into which he had thrown himself to escape from their fury. The yamacks now every where broke out into open insurrection; the janissaries favoured them; the castles of Europe and Asia, the guardians of the Dardanelles, fell into their hands. The ulemas declared against the sultaun, upon the ground of his having attempted to subvert the fundamental institutions of religion; the heads of the principal persons in Constantinople were successively brought by the ferocious bands of assassins to the square of the Etmeidan, the headquarters of the insurgents; the sultaun himself only purchased a momentary respite, by delivering up to their fury the Bostange-Backy, who was particularly obnoxious; and the ferocious Cabakchy-Oglou, the chief of the rebellious yamacks, gained the entire command of the capital. After two days of bloodshed and confusion, which recalled the worst days of prætorian license, Selim was formally dethroned by

June 1, 1807.

the Grand Mufti, who announced to him, in person, his deposition. He was consigned to prison; at the entrance of which he met his nephew Mustapha, who was brought out thence to be placed on the throne, and whom he embraced in passing, wishing him prosperity, and commending his subjects to his care. Immediately the cannon of the castles announced the commencement of the reign of the new sultaun; the foreign ambassadors all recognised his authority;[1] the immense population of the city submitted with acclamations to his officers; and the unfortunate Selim, shut up in a dungeon, was soon as completely forgotten as if he had never existed.[1] CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

[1] Dumas, xix. 113, 117. Jom. ii. 431, 432.

But although the revolution appeared to be thus completely successful in Constantinople, a greater degree of fidelity lingered in the breasts of the troops on the Danube, and the progress of events in the capital paved the way for a second revolution. Frivolous, sensual, and apathetic, the new sultaun Mustapha proved himself entirely unequal to the direction of the fearful tempest which had elevated him to the throne. Disunion soon broke out among the chiefs who had headed the revolt, whose common rapacity rendered them alike an object of horror to the people. The perfidious Carmican, who had been the main cause of Selim's overthrow, was seized, deposed, and his property confiscated; the ferocious Cabakchy became all-powerful, and substituted in his stead Tayar Pasha, formerly pasha of Trebizonde, who had been displaced by the former sultaun. Tayar, however, soon showed himself not less tyrannical and rapacious than his predecessor. Prince Suzzo, the first dragoman of the Porte, was, by his orders, massacred at the gates of the seraglio, upon suspicion of having revealed to the ambassador of France

Counter-revolution at Constantinople.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

the secret intention of the Divan to treat with England. Tayar's extortions roused the populace against him, who crowded round the gates of the seraglio demanding his head. His old ally Cabakchy yielded to the torrent, and proclaimed himself his enemy; and the tyrannical Carmican, abandoned by all, was glad to escape to Roudschouck, where Mustapha Barayctar, the commander of that place, was secretly collecting the disaffected, and fomenting a counter-revolution. The arrival of Tayar, and his imminent danger, determined their measures. Selecting a choice body of four thousand horse, followed by twelve thousand infantry, chiefly the new troops, who could be relied on, he crossed the Balkan to Adrianople; and, together, they marched to Constantinople bearing with them the *Sandjak-cheriff*, or standard of Mahomet. Barayctar combated the rebels with their own weapons. Hadgy-Ali, fortified by a firman of the Grand Vizier, surrounded the house of Cabakchy in the night with troops, surprised him in the middle of his harem, and cut off his head, which he sent to Barayctar. The cries of the women of the harem having alarmed the neighbourhood, the yamacks assembled to arms; disregarding the firman of the Grand Seignior, they attacked and overthrew the handful of troops with which Hadgy-Ali had destroyed Cabakchy, and shut them up in some houses, to which they set fire. The intrepid Ali, however, sallied forth sword in hand, cut his way through the besiegers, and threw himself into one of the castles of the Bosphorus, from whence, after being vainly besieged by the yamacks for three days, he made his way to the victorious army of the Grand Vizier, now at the gates of Constantinople.[1]

May 21, 1808.

[1] Dumas, xix. 123, 126. Jom. iii. 382, 383.

At the entrance of the capital Barayctar made

known his conditions to sultaun Mustapha, viz. that he should exile the Grand Mufti, and disband the yamacks. Too happy to extricate himself from such a crisis by these concessions, the sultaun at once agreed. Barayctar feigned entire satisfaction, and the deluded sovereign resumed with undiminished zest his favourite amusements. But the undaunted pasha of Roudschouck had deeper designs in view. A few days after, learning that the Grand Seignior had gone to pass the day with the ladies of his harem at one of his kiosks, or country residences, he put himself at the head of a chosen body of troops, and as the Grand Vizier hesitated to accompany him, violently tore from his hands the seals of office, made himself master of the *Sandjak-cheriff*, and, preceded by that revered standard, marched to the seraglio to dethrone the reigning sultaun, and restore the captive Selim. The outer gates of the palace flew open at the sight of the sacred ensign; but the bostangis at the inner gates opposed so firm a resistance, that time was afforded for the sultaun to return by a back way, and regain his private apartments. Meanwhile, Barayctar's troops thundered at the gates, and loudly demanded that Selim should instantly be restored to them, and seated on the throne. To gain time, Mustapha's adherents feigned compliance; but, meanwhile, he himself gave orders that Selim should be strangled in prison. The order was immediately executed, and the dead body of the unhappy sultaun thrown into the court to Barayctar's troops. Pierced to the heart, the faithful Barayctar threw himself on his master's remains, which he bedewed with his tears. In a transport of rage he ordered the officers of the seraglio to be brought before him and instantly executed.[1] Sultaun Mustapha was dethroned, and

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

Fresh revolution. Deposition of Mustapha. Death of Selim, and accession of Mahmoud. May 21, 1808.

[1] Dumas, xix. 124, 130. Jom. iii. 384.

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

shut up in the same prison from which Selim had just been brought to execution; and his younger brother MAHMOUD, the last of the royal and sacred race, put on the throne.

A third revolution. Barayctar is killed with Mustapha, and the janissaries triumph.

It might have been supposed that this bloody catastrophe would have terminated these frightful revolutions; but fortune was not yet weary of exhibiting on this dark stage the mutability of human affairs. Barayctar, as the just reward of his fidelity and courage, was created Grand Vizier, and for some months the machine of government went on smoothly and quietly; but it was soon discovered that Sultaun Mahmoud was not less determined to reform the national institutions than Selim had been; that to this disposition he joined an inflexibility of character, which rendered him incomparably more formidable; and that the great capacity of the Grand Vizier rendered it highly probable that their projects would soon be carried into complete execution. The jealousy of the janissaries was again awakened. A large portion of the army which had overthrown Sultaun Mustapha, had been withdrawn to make head against the Russians on the Danube; and the opportunity seemed favourable for again assailing the new order of things. The ulemas, the mufti, and the leaders of the disaffected, again organized an insurrection, and it broke out in the middle of November.

Notwithstanding all the precautions which Mahmoud and the Grand Vizier Barayctar could take, the party of the janissaries on this occasion proved victorious. A furious multitude of these haughty prætorians surrounded the noble barracks of the new troops, set fire to them, and consumed several hundreds in the conflagration, while another body directed their steps to the palace of the Grand Vizier,

and a third to the seraglio itself. Four thousand chosen guards defended the sultaun, and defeated all the efforts of the insurgents at that point; but the few faithful defenders of the Grand Vizier were driven into his palace, to which the savage multitude immediately set fire; and the heroic Barayctar, to shorten his sufferings, himself set fire to a powder magazine, which he had provided as a last resource against his enemies, and, with his whole household, was blown into the air. Indignant at these scenes of horror, Sultaun Mahmoud gave orders for his troops to sally forth from the seraglio, and others from the adjoining forts of the Bosphorus to enter the town; and Constantinople immediately became the theatre of general bloodshed, massacre, and conflagration. The insurgents set fire to every quarter of which they obtained possession to augment the confusion; and men, women, and children perished alike by the sword or in the flames. At length, after forty-eight hours of continued combat and unceasing horror, the party of the janissaries prevailed: great part of the new troops perished by their hands; the remainder surrendered; and the sultaun, who had previously strangled his rival Mustapha in prison, was compelled to purchase peace by the sacrifice of all his ministers who were bent on the new order of things. Yet even in these moments of victorious insurrection, the force of old attachment and long-established loyalty to the sacred race was apparent. Mahmoud, the last of the race of Othman, with which the existence of the empire was thought to be wound up, became the object of veneration even to the rebels who had subverted his government;[1] and he reigned in safety, with despotic power, by the support of the very faction who would have consigned him to the

CHAP. LXIV. 1808.

[1] Jom. iii. 383, 385. Ann. Reg. 1808, 238.

CHAP. LXIV.

dungeon, and probably the bowstring, had his imprisoned relative survived to be elevated to the throne.

1808.

Passive indifference of the people during these disorders.

In these sanguinary tumults, the great bulk of the people remained in a state of passive indifference, ready to submit implicitly to either of the factions which might prove victorious in the strife. The contest lay between the ulemas, the mufti, the janissaries on the one side, and the court and officers of state, with such of the new troops as they had organized, on the other. The multitude took no part in the combat till the insurgents roused their passions by the hope of plunder or the sight of conflagration. Like the Parisian populace, on occasion of the contests for power between the club of Clichy and the bayonets of Augereau in 1797, or the grenadiers of Napoleon and the council of the Five Hundred,* they submitted in silence to power which they could not resist, and avoided a contest in which they had no interest. Years of revolution had produced the same result in the metropolis of France which centuries of despotism had done in that of Turkey; and in the social conflicts which convulsed the state, fanaticism and tyranny in the east, produced almost as great atrocities as infidelity and democracy had done in the west of Europe.[1]

[1] Dumas, xix. 129.

Napoleon's desertion of the Turks in the treaty of Tilsit.

These repeated convulsions at Constantinople proved highly injurious to the Ottoman cause in the field of diplomacy, because they gave Napoleon, as already noticed, a pretext at the treaty of Tilsit for holding out, as he did, that his engagements were with Sultaun Selim; that he was under no obligation to keep faith with the ferocious rabble who had overthrown his government, and consigned himself to a dungeon; and that the Turks had now proved themselves a

* *Ante*, iii. 373, 681.

CHAP. LXIV.

1808.

mere horde of barbarians, who could no longer be tolerated in Europe. It was one of the conditions, accordingly, of the treaty of Tilsit, that France was to offer its mediation to effect an adjustment of the differences between Russia and the Sublime Porte; and that, in the event of the latter declining the terms arranged between Alexander and Napoleon, she was to be jointly attacked by them both. Russia was to be at entire liberty to annex Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bulgaria to her empire; while Macedonia, Thrace, Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago, were to be allotted to the French Emperor, who immediately commenced enquiries and surveys as to his share in the partition.* By such shameful desertion of his ally did Napoleon requite the Turks for the fidelity with which they had stood by his side, when the British squadron under Sir J. Duckworth threatened Constantinople with destruction, and, if more energetically led, might have effected it.[1]

Causes which deferred serious operations till spring 1809.

Russia, however, had other and more pressing objects of ambition nearer home, which were also amply provided for by the treaty of Tilsit: The situation of her principal armies in the north of Poland, pointed them out as immediately deserving of attention; and the conquerors of Eylau defiled in great and irresistible strength through St Petersburg, on their route for Finland. The prosecution of the war in that province, long the object of desire to the cabinet of St Petersburg, which will immediately be considered, rendered the Russian Government unwilling to engage in hostilities at the same time on the Danube; and the Turks, distracted by the cruel dissensions at Constantinople, were too happy to prolong a negotiation which might relieve them, during their agonies,

Nov. 1808.

* *Ante*, vi. 299; where the clause of partition is quoted.

CHAP. LXIV. 1809.

from the Muscovite battalions. But the war in Finland having terminated, as might have been expected, by the annexation of that province to the Russian dominions, and peace having been concluded, as will immediately be detailed, with the court of Stockholm, the Czar turned his ambitious eyes to the Turkish dominions. Napoleon formally abandoned the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia to the conquest of his powerful northern ally; the army on the Danube was reinforced by sixty battalions; and orders were sent to its commander, Prince Prosorowsky, to cross that river and carry the war with vigour into the heart of the Turkish territories.[1]

March 16, 1809.

[1] Jom. iii. 385, 386. Val. 44, 45.

Campaign of 1809.

The Russians, however, were far from reaping that benefit from the distractions of the Ottoman empire, and their own surpassing strength, which might have been anticipated. Prosorowsky, though an able general, was little acquainted with the very peculiar mode of war required in Turkish warfare, where the enemy's infantry throw themselves into fortresses, which they defend with desperate courage to the last extremity; and their horse scouring in vast multitudes a desert and unhealthy country, disappear upon a reverse, and again assemble in undiminished strength if a farther advance by the enemy is attempted. His force was very great—one hundred and twenty-five battalions, ninety-five squadrons, and ten thousand Cossacks, presented a total of eighty thousand infantry and twenty-five thousand horse, to which the Turks, severely weakened by their internal dissensions and the defection of Czerny George, who had declared for the Russians, had no force to oppose which was capable of keeping the field. They wisely, therefore, confined themselves to throwing strong garrisons into the fortresses on the Danube, and

directed their principal forces against Servia, where their undisciplined militia were more likely to meet with antagonists in the field, over whom they had a chance of prevailing. This plan proved entirely successful. Sultaun Mahmoud succeeded in rousing the military spirit of the Ottoman population in European Turkey; and eighty thousand Turks, to whom Czerny George could only oppose thirty thousand mountaineers, soon compelled him to recede from Nizza, to which he had advanced, to retire with loss behind the Morava, and finally take refuge under the cannon of Belgrade. A corps of Russians now advanced from the north to the support of their Servian allies, and in some degree changed the face of affairs. The Ottomans, on the side of Bosnia, which held out for the Grand Seignior, were driven back into their own territories, but still their grand army kept possession of the greater part of Servia, and threatened Belgrade; and it was evident, that unless a powerful diversion was effected on the Lower Danube, the campaign would terminate entirely to the advantage of the Turks.[1]

1809.

May 1809.

July 1809.

[1] Jom. ii. 388, 389. Vol. 44. 45.

Checkered successes on both sides. May 19, 1809.

Prosorowsky's first enterprise was against Giurgevo, near the mouth of the Danube; and, ignorant of the quality of the enemy with whom he had to deal, as well as misled by the successful issue of the assault of Ismael and Oczakow in former days, he ventured to attempt to carry it by escalade. A bloody repulse, in which he lost two thousand men, taught him his mistake. Abandoning this presumptuous attempt, the Russian general next invested Brahilow, on the right bank of the river, and began to batter its walls with heavy cannon, though without going through the form of regular approaches. Deeming it practicable to carry the place by escalade

June 6.

CHAP. LXIV. 1809. before the walls were breached, an assault was attempted in that manner; but the steady valour and deadly aim of the Mussulmen who manned the ramparts, again baffled all the efforts of the Muscovite
June 14. infantry, and they were repulsed with the loss of
Aug. 2. above seven thousand men. To conceal these disasters, the Russian general now merely converted the siege into a blockade, crossed the Danube at Galacz, and openly proclaimed his resolution to carry the war to the foot of the Balkan. But this operation was not prosecuted with any activity; and the Turks, emboldened by their success at Giurgevo and Brahi-
Aug. 4. low, ventured, under the Grand Vizier, to cross the Danube at the former of these towns, and began to ravage the plains of Moldavia. Meanwhile, Prosorowsky died, and he was succeeded in the command by Bagrathion, who, in order to draw back the Turks from their incursion on the northern bank of the river, immediately advanced against Silistria, the most important fortress on the whole northern frontier. But the Turks having thrown fifteen thousand men into that stronghold, the Russian general did not deem himself in sufficient force to undertake the siege of a place of such strength so defended, and therefore confined himself to a simple blockade,
Sept. Oct. in maintaining which his troops suffered most severely from the unhealthiness of its environs in the autumnal months. The Grand Vizier, however, alarmed for a fortress of such importance, at length recrossed the Danube, and detached fifteen thousand men to beat up the enemy's quarters in its vicinity, in the end of October. Bagrathion advanced against this body, and an action, with no decisive result,
Nov. 3. ensued at Tartaritza, in which, however, it soon appeared that the Russians had been worsted; for

CHAP. LXIV.

Bagrathion immediately recrossed the Danube, and raised the blockade. Ismael, however, which had been long blockaded, surrendered on the 21st September; and Bagrathion, after so many reverses, succeeded in throwing a radiance over the conclusion of the campaign by the reduction of Brahilow, which had been long invested on both banks of the river, and surrendered by capitulation, from want of provisions, in the end of November; thereby giving the Russians the great advantage of a solid fortress, which secured their passage of the Danube.[1]

1809. Sept. 21.

[1] Val. 45, 47. Jom. 389, 390.

Annexation of Wallachia and Moldavia to Russia, and opening of the campaign of 1810.

The Swedish war in 1808, and the Austrian one of 1809, had operated as important diversions in favour of the Ottoman forces; but in the beginning of 1810, the cabinet of St Petersburg resolved to carry on their operations with much greater vigour against the Turks, fearful lest the present favourable opportunity afforded by the conclusion of the peace with Napoleon should glide away, without its being turned to due advantage by the agreed-on conquests from the Ottomans. In the beginning of the year, accordingly, an imperial ukase appeared, formally annexing Moldavia and Wallachia, which for three years had been occupied by their troops, to the Russian empire, and declaring the Danube, from the Austrian frontier to the sea, the southern European boundary of their mighty dominion. This decisive step was immediately followed up by the most extensive military preparations. The Muscovite army on the Danube was augmented to a hundred and ten thousand men, of whom thirty thousand were horse. Bagrathion, whose checkered success had been far from answering the expectations of the cabinet of St Petersburg, was replaced by Kaminski,* a gen-

Jan. 21, 1810.

*. Son of the general of the same name, who commanded the Russians

CHAP. LXIV. 1810.

éral, learned, brave, and in the flower of his age; but by no means possessing experience in Turkish warfare adequate to the difficult task with which he was entrusted. Seeing himself at the head of so great a force, and desirous to signalize the commencement of his command by decisive success, he resolved to divide his troops into two parts; and while with the left he himself advanced by Hirsova to Schumla, the right was to lay siege to Silistria and Roudschouck, and the lesser fortresses on the Danube, so as to become master of the whole line of that important stream. The project was well conceived, as it offered the important advantage of crossing the plains and barren hills between the Danube and the Balkan, before the unhealthy heats commenced, and when the yet green herbage offered ample subsistence for the horses of the army; but it failed from not sufficiently estimating the desperate valour of the Turks in the defence of fortified places, which has so often rendered abortive the best laid plans for the subversion of the Ottoman empire.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 464, 465. Val. 64, 68.

Great trade of the English up the Danube into Germany.

During the winter, a sort of tacit armistice, attended by very singular effects, prevailed between the two armies. Though the Russians were masters of many batteries on the left bank of the Danube, and, by their possession of Brahilow, had the command of its principal mouth, yet, during the whole winter of 1809-10, they made no attempt to obstruct the navigation of that river; the Turkish and Austrian vessels continued to ply upon it as during a period of profound peace, and English goods to an enormous amount mounted the stream, paid duties to the pasha of Widdin, and were carried through

in the commencement of the Polish war in 1807, and went mad during the first retreat from the Vistula.—*Ante*, vi. 34.

the Rothenbourg, on men's heads and horses' backs, into Hungary, and thence through the whole of Germany. The secret of this extraordinary traffic was to be found in the continental system of Napoleon, then in full activity in northern Europe, which had so immensely enhanced the price of all kinds of British merchandise, that the vast profits of the merchants, who were fortunate enough to get any introduced, enabled them to bribe the authorities in all the different countries through which they passed, to wink at the transit of the goods, even in direct violation of the engagements of their respective sovereigns. Thus, at the very time that the French Emperor flattered himself, that by the treaty of Tilsit, and the accession of the Russian Autocrat to the continental coalition, he had closed the last doors against the introduction of English manufactures to the continent, the generals of the very power he had subdued, were conniving at the system against which he had made such strenuous efforts, and found in their conquests the means of extending it: a striking proof of the extreme difficulty, even with the greatest power, of extinguishing that mutual intercourse which arises out of the wants, and grows with the happiness of mankind.[1]

[1] Val. 66, 67.

First operations of the campaign of 1810.

The right of the Russians crossed the Danube, in the middle of March, at Casemir, between Roudschouck and Widdin; but it was not till the middle of May that the left wing of their army entered upon the campaign, and advanced to Bazarjik. Meanwhile, the Grand Vizier, Kora-Jussuf Pasha, already known by his defence of Acre against Napoleon,* had been indefatigable in his endeavours to accumu-

* *Ante*, iii. p. 483.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810. late and discipline a formidable force in the great intrenched camp of SCHUMLA, and strengthen the numerous redoubts by which it is defended; but when the Russians approached, he cautiously kept his still ill-disciplined host within their ramparts.

June 3. Kaminski immediately laid siege to Bazarjik, which, after a short siege and the capture of eight hundred of its garrison in an unfortunate sortie, was carried by assault, in the beginning of June, with two thousand prisoners. The Russians, who were sixty thousand strong on the lower Danube, finding no enemy to oppose them in the field, divided their forces; and while the main body, under Kaminski in person, advanced towards the Balkan, Langeron, with his corps, was dispatched to besiege Silistria, and lesser bodies sent against Tourtoukai and Rasgrad. Lange-

June 10. ron proved entirely successful: in seven days after he

June 13. appeared before its walls, Silistria, one of the strongest places on the Danube, surrendered by capitulation, though the sap was still one hundred and eighty yards from the ditch, on condition only of the garrison and inhabitants retiring where they chose;

June 17. while Tourtoukai and Rasgrad yielded soon after to the terrors of a bombardment. These successes, which proved that a golden key, or favourable conditions to the inhabitants, could sometimes be as effectual as an iron one, or force, in opening the Turkish gates, encouraged the commander-in-chief, without awaiting the issue of the operations of his right wing against Roudschouck, to advance towards Schumla; and he appeared, accordingly, with forty thousand men in front of that celebrated stronghold, hitherto the *ne plus ultra* of Muscovite advance towards Constantinople, on the 22d June.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 465. Val. 68, 71.

Schumla, which in all the wars between Russia

and Turkey, has been a place of the highest importance, is a considerable town, situated on the northern slope of the Balkan, where the great road from Belgrade and Bucharest to Constantinople first ascends the slopes of the mountains. To the traveller who approaches it from the open and desert hills extending southward from the Danube, it exhibits the appearance of a triangular sheet of vast extent spread over the hollow of the mountains, and extending up the heights on either side; not unlike the distant view of Algiers over the waves of the Mediterranean. Thirty thousand industrious inhabitants fill its streets with animation, and a clear torrent descending through its centre, secures both to them and the inmates of the intrenched camp, which extends far beyond their dwellings, an ample supply of the indispensable element of water. The town cannot be said to be regularly fortified, even though its position, at the point of intersection of the principal roads which cross the Balkan from north to south, renders it a stratagetical point of the very highest importance; and it is overhung, in rear, by a succession of eminences, which rise one above another, till they are lost in the woody thickets of Mount Hemus. But these heights, of difficult access and covered with thick brushwood, are entirely inaccessible to European cavalry and artillery; the vast circuit of the intrenched camp renders it almost impossible to invest or blockade its circumference; supplies are thus introduced with ease from the rear; and though the redoubts consist only of a ditch and rampart of clay, and they are placed merely on the commanding points, leaving often a space, several hundred yards broad, open without any defence, yet in the hands of the Turks, and janissaries they constituted a most effi-

Description of Schumla.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810.

cient barrier. In 1744, these field-works had repulsed the utmost efforts of the Russians, under Marshal Romanzoff; and at this time, when they were garrisoned by Jussuf Pasha, the defender of Acre, with thirty thousand chosen troops, who had employed months in clearing out and strengthening them, it seemed an undertaking beyond the strength even of Kaminski's army to effect their conquest.[1]

[1] Malte Brun, vi. 238. Walsh. 158. Clarke's Travels, viii. 241 Val. 49.

Unsuccessful operations against Schumla.

The Russian general commenced his operations on his own right, in order to turn the Turkish camp, and, establishing himself on the heights in its rear, interpose between the Grand Vizier and Constantinople. He succeeded in establishing a division on these rugged and wood-clad eminences; but the difficulty of dragging artillery up such broken ravines, and the danger of risking a large part of the army in a position, where, if defeated, it would be deprived of a retreat to the Danube, deterred him from establishing himself in that important position. Several inconsiderable actions took place, particularly at the heights of the Grotto, in the rear of Schumla, and the Russians were entirely masters of the road from that town to Constantinople; but the investment was never complete: a large convoy of provisions was introduced into the Turkish camp soon after, notwithstanding the utmost vigilance of the besiegers; the desperate valour of the janissaries rendered the contest for every thicket or rocky eminence a scene of blood, in which the assailants generally lost more men than the enemy; the strength of the works in front to the north of the town, precluded the hope of a successful assault; and, after several weeks spent in fruitless efforts, Kaminski was obliged to renounce his enterprise.[1] To cover the disgrace of an open retreat, he left thirty thousand men, under his brother,

June 24.

July 7.

July 12.

[1] Jom. iii. 465, 466. Val. 77, 93.

to continue a distant blockade, and himself hastened, with twelve thousand choice troops, to co-operate in the siege of ROUDSCHOUCK. CHAP. LXIV. 1810.

This fortress, which became justly celebrated by the murderous assault which followed, is a Turkish town containing thirty thousand inhabitants, with a single rampart and wet ditch, but without either bastions, counterscarps, glacis, or outworks, like the other Turkish fortresses which have already been described. It did not possess more powerful means of defence than Brahilow, nor so much so as Silistria; but every defect was supplied by the resources of the governor, BOSNIAK AGA, a man of cool judgment and invariable resolution, at the head of a garrison of seven thousand men, and whose example had roused the whole male population of the place capable of bearing arms, nearly as numerous, to the determination of unflinching resistance, in defence of their hearths and their liberty. When Kaminski joined the besieging force, its number was raised to above twenty thousand men; and, as the rampart was in part ruined, though it could hardly be said that a practicable breach had been formed, an assault was ordered. Every effort was made to animate the soldiers; Kaminski himself, in full uniform, rode through the ranks, speaking to the men on the exploits of their regiments in former times, and animating their courage for the decisive assault which was approaching. The clergy joined in the efforts to animate the men; and the attack was ordered on the 3d August, a day held in peculiar veneration in Russia, from being the fête-day of the Empress Mother.[1] Preparations for the assault of Roudschouck. [1] Val. 98, 101. Jom. iii. 466.

Bosniak Aga, from the time that the cannon of the besiegers had begun to rattle against his walls, had not returned a shot; and from this circumstance, the Dreadful defeat of the assault. Aug. 3.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810.

younger Russian soldiers flattered themselves that very little resistance was to be anticipated; while the veterans feared, from long experience, that he was only reserving his whole strength for the decisive moment of assault. During the whole preceding night, a vehement fire was kept up from all the batteries, and at daybreak the troops advanced to the attack in five massy columns, one of which was charged with mounting the breach, while the others were to endeavour to effect a diversion by escalading the rampart in those situations where it was still uninjured. The troops advanced with their wonted steadiness to the assault, and soon reached the foot of the scarp; but it was soon found that the pasha's previous silence had neither arisen from terror nor inattention. From every roof, every window, and every loophole that could bear upon the assailants, a dreadful fire issued the moment that they came within range: the parapet and the *terre-pleine* were lined with undaunted Mussulmen, who opened a well-sustained discharge upon the enemy; and the troops, staggered by the severity of the fire, recoiled from the foot of the rampart, and began from the opposite side of the ditch to exchange musket shots with their visible and invisible antagonists. In vain the officers, tired with this fruitless butchery, leapt into the ditch, mounted the scaling-ladders, and reached the summit of the rampart: in that exposed situation they were speedily cut off by the Turkish scymitars; and two columns, which the besieged permitted to enter, were almost entirely destroyed by the dreadful attack of the janissaries armed with their daggers and sabres.* At

* A circumstance characteristic of the Russian armies at this period occurred at this assault. Many soldiers, under pretence of being wounded, as usual in similar cases, strayed from the scene of danger,

noon the Turkish flag still waved on all the minarets; and it was not till six at night that the commander-in-chief reluctantly sounded a retreat, leaving eight thousand killed and wounded in the ditch and around the walls, of whom four thousand were immediately decapitated by their valiant, but in this respect ruthless enemies.[1]

[1] Val. 101, 103. Jom. iii. 466.

Operations which followed this defeat.

This dreadful repulse wellnigh prostrated the strength of the besiegers, and necessarily disabled them from attempting any thing beyond an ineffectual blockade; and if the Grand Vizier at Schumla had taken advantage of it, to sally forth with all his forces and harass the enemy, the result probably would have been, that the Russians at all points would have been driven across the Danube. But, with true Turkish apathy, he remained quiet where he was, without attempting any thing serious, and thus Kaminski gained a precious breathing time to repair his disasters. A sally, a few days afterwards, by the Grand Vizier, near Schumla, was repulsed with the loss of three thousand men, though the victory was far from being bloodless to the Russians, who lost above half that number; and they soon afterwards raised the investment of Schumla, and retired to Bazarjik and the Danube: while Kaminski, from numerical weakness, was obliged to abandon the island in the Danube which he had occupied opposite Roudchouck, which was immediately occupied by the besieged, who destroyed the works erected there, so that their communication with the country was in a great degree restored. Nevertheless, the

Aug. 7.

and got into the rear: Kaminski caused them all to be examined, and such as were unhurt were sent back to their posts *with strokes of the whip*. This laborious operation consumed a considerable time, which might have been more profitably employed in pushing forward the assault.—VALENTINI, 104.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810.

Russians, with great perseverance, still kept their ground before the fortress on the north bank of the Danube; and an opportunity soon occurred of striking an important blow.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 466. Val. 102, 107.

Operations of the Seraskier of Sophia for the raising of the siege.

The Divan ordered the Seraskier of Sophia, a considerable potentate in European Turkey, to assemble a force for the deliverance of Roudschouck, the pasha of which was now making the most vehement representations of his inability to continue the defence much longer if he was not relieved;* and for this purpose he assembled a body of thirty thousand men on the river Jantra, at the distance of about forty miles from the fortress. Sensible, however, that his troops, which were for the most part mere undisciplined militia, would be wholly unable to withstand the Russian army in the open field, he took post on the river near BATTIN, and, after the Turkish fashion, immediately proceeded to fortify his camp. Its situation was well selected, being a half-deserted plain at the confluence of the Jantra and the Danube, with a few fruit-trees scattered over its surface, and watered on two sides by those ample streams. When seen from a distance, this surface appeared level, but on a nearer approach it was discovered to be intersected by several rocky ravines. Two of these fissures, which were impassable even for foot soldiers, fortified the sides of the camp, which rested on the Danube near the confluence of the two rivers in rear, while the neck of land which lay between them, and by which alone access could be obtained to its interior, strengthened by two redoubts,

* "We have almostlost our eyesight in straining to see the columns approaching to deliver us. Our loss already amounts to six thousand men; and we have only provisions for ten days."—*Bosniak Aga to the Grand Vizier*, August 12, 1810. VALENTINI, 107.

was covered, in the interval between them, with thick bushes and underwood, where the janissary light infantry would have a decided superiority over the Russian tirailleurs, and through which it would be difficult for the latter to bring up their numerous artillery to counterbalance this disadvantage. Nevertheless, Kaminski, desirous to wipe off the disgrace of the repulse at Roudschouck, and fearful of the approach of Ali Pacha, the far-famed ruler of Albania, who, with his hardy mountaineers, was slowly approaching at the summons of the Grand Seignior, to co-operate in the operations, resolved to hazard an attack.[1]

[1] Val. 110, 115. Jom. iii. 467.

For this purpose, having previously strengthened the besieging force before Roudschouck, with half of the forces which had been withdrawn from Schumla, and detached General Kulneff with a division of six thousand men to reconnoitre the Turkish camp, and prevent them from foraging beyond its limits, the general-in-chief set out from the environs of Roudschouck with twelve thousand men, and, following the right bank of the river, appeared in front of the Turkish intrenchments. They appeared to be so strong, that notwithstanding the Russian superiority, especially in artillery, of which they had a hundred pieces, it was deemed impracticable to hazard an attack in front, at least unless strongly supported by simultaneous operations on either flank. The enemy, it was soon discovered, had two intrenched camps, the works of which mutually supported each other, and their guns were so disposed as completely to command in rear the navigation of the Danube, on which they also had a powerful flotilla destined for the relief of Roudschouck. The only practicable way of reaching

Kaminski's plan of attack on the Turkish camp. Aug. 27.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810.

them that remained, was by an attack in flank, near the village of Battin, where the ravine, though steep and rugged, was practicable for foot soldiers; while as heavy a fire as possible was opened on the intrenched camp in front nearest the isthmus, from an eminence which had been with great judgment seized and strengthened by the Cossacks. Meanwhile, strong reinforcements were ordered up under Woinoff from Silistria; and as a strong reconnoisance under Kulneff on the front of the enemy's position, with the troops in square, had led to no advantage, and was attended with considerable loss, Kaminski made every effort to collect troops from all quarters; and Woinoff having at length come up with five thousand men, the grand attack was fixed for the 7th September.[1]

Aug. 27.

Sept. 4. 1 Val. 115, 125.

Battle of Battin. Sept. 7.

The battle commenced at daybreak; Kaminski himself, at the head of the whole cavalry, advanced to within cannon-shot of the principal camp, while another column of infantry moved up in squares to the front of the lesser one, and Kulneff with the left was dispatched to the other side of the ravine, which formed the western defence of the Turkish position; but the latter general did not arrive at the point of attack assigned to him till considerably after the time calculated on, which led to the discomfiture of the Russians on the first day. Kaminski himself with the centre stormed the principal heights which commanded one of the intrenched camps, though with great loss, and put all the Turks who defended them to the sword; but Kulneff failed in his attack on the left from the side of the ravine, and though one of his columns succeeded in penetrating into the camp, yet it was immediately cut to pieces by the Turkish scymitars; while on the right the

brave Illowolski, who conducted the assault on the other intrenched camp, was mortally wounded on the edge of the ditch, and the bravest of his followers who crossed it left their heads in the hands of the Turks, who fought like desperadoes. Thus the attack having failed on both flanks, though a most important advantage had been gained in the centre, Kaminski desisted from farther attempts for the night; merely retaining the important heights which he himself had won, and concentrated his troops as much as possible in that quarter, while Kulneff got under shelter in the bottom of the rocky ravine which he had crossed.[1]

[1] Val. 124, 127.

Plan for the renewal of the battle.

The Turkish camps were now completely surrounded by the Muscovite troops, and many of the Imperial generals, seeing the desperate manner in which they had been defended on the preceding day, strongly recommended the general-in-chief to make a bridge of gold for a retiring enemy, and withdraw Kulneff's divisions from the ravine during the night, so as to leave them a retreat up the course of the Danube. The Turks also, elated by their success, gave way to every demonstration of joy; and in sight of both armies, went through the barbarous operation, on the top of their intrenchments, of decapitating the Russians who had been left on the field.* But Kaminski was resolute: orders were given to renew the attack at daybreak, the principal effort being directed against the gorge of the camps, where the works, owing to the natural strength of

* The Prince de Ligne observed, on this practice of the Turks, to cut off the heads of the wounded or prisoners, that it was "more formidable in appearance than reality; for it could do no harm to the dead, it was often a relief to the wounded, and that it was rather an advantage to the unhurt, as it left them no chance of escape but in victory."—VALENTINI, 69.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810. the ravines in their rear, were least formidable. Kulneff, who had had a violent altercation with the general-in-chief, was put under arrest, and the command of his troops devolved to Sabanejef, and the whole artillery brought to bear on the enemy's camp; that on Kaminski's heights firing down from above, that of Kulneff being pointed up from the ravine below, so as to throw his howitzers upwards into the intrenchments.[1]

[1] Val. 129.

The attack of Sabanejef proved entirely successful: after encountering a vigorous opposition, his troops, gallantly led by their general, made their way into the camp to which he was opposed; but the Turks seeing their position no longer tenable, adopted and bravely executed a most extraordinary resolution. Suddenly assembling the whole of his cavalry and the bravest of his infantry, Muktar Pasha, abandoning his camp and all its contents, poured out by one of the gates like a torrent, and making straight across the plateau, sought the shelter of the ravine on the right, which was not occupied by the Russians in any force. This unlooked-for deluge had wellnigh swept away Kaminski himself, who was moving at the time from the left to the centre, in order to direct an attack on the front of the camp. For a considerable time this singular evacuation remained unknown to the Russian centre, who seeing the standards of Mahomet still floating on the intrenchments, an a multitude of foot soldiers on the rampart firing vehemently, and shouting Allah! deemed the tumult owing only to a partial sally from the works. But, at length, they too left the rampart; its fire gradually died away; the standards alone remained on the summit; and the fact becoming known, the Russians on all sides poured with loud shouts into the enclo-

Sept. 8.

sure, and with savage revenge, excited by the Turkish cruelty to the prisoners, put all they still found within to the sword. The guns on the intrenchments were instantly turned against the flying swarms of Ottomans, and the Russian cavalry quickly pursuing, came up even with their horse, and did considerable mischief. But the decisive trophies of the victory were the principal camp of the Ottomans, with fourteen guns and two hundred standards; the whole flotilla which lay in the Danube, laden with provisions and ammunition for the relief of Roudschouck; and five thousand men, whom the lesser camp were obliged to surrender as prisoners of war, with Achmet Pasha, the second in command. The brave Seraskier had died the same day of his wounds.[1]

[1] Val. 129, 133. Jom. iii. 467.

The immediate consequence of this great victory was the capture of Sistowa, a fortified place on the Danube, in the neighbourhood, which surrendered a few days afterwards, with the whole Turkish flotilla which had taken refuge under its walls. Meanwhile, Count Langeron, with the troops now considerably reinforced at Roudschouck, was pressing the siege of that fortress with the utmost possible activity; and had made himself master of the island in the Danube, which forms the point of communication between it and the fortress of Giurgevo, situated on the opposite bank. Seeing the commander of the latter place, which was the weaker of the two, thus separated from his colleague, Langeron summoned him to surrender; but the reply was in the true laconic style: "Giurgevo is not yet swimming in its blood." Bosniak Aga, however, seeing the flotilla on which his whole hopes of relief were fixed captured, became sensible of the necessity of coming to terms of accommodation; but the conqueror of Battin, elated with his

Capitulation of Roudchouck. Sept. 12.

CHAP. LXIV. 1810. recent success, and the effects of a similar severity to Achmet Pasha, refused any terms but those of absolute surrender; upon which the proud Turk declared he would die in the breach first. The intelligence, however, which the Russian general received shortly after, of the elevation of Bernadotte to the rank of crown-prince and heir-apparent of Sweden, coupled with accounts of the sacred standard having been unfurled at Constantinople, induced him to relax from this ill-timed rigour; and by the intervention of Count Langeron, a capitulation was at length agreed Sept. 26. on, in the end of September, in virtue of which the pasha was permitted to retire with his whole troops and inhabitants, leaving only the walls, cannon, standards, and military stores to the Russians. These conditions, the fair reward of his heroic defence, were so favourable, that Bosniak Aga would probably have Sept. 28. willingly acceded to them in the beginning of the [1] Jom. iii. 467. Val. 135, 139. siege; and the pasha of Giurgevo immediately after capitulated on the same favourable terms.[1]

Though the Russians had thus made themselves Evacuation of Roudchouck, and ruin of Sistowa. masters of these important strongholds on the Danube, yet the obstinate resistance of Bosniak Aga had entirely ruined their designs for the campaign. The rainy season had now set in; the evacuation of Roudchouck, which the Turks prolonged as much as possible, took nearly a month; Kaminski did not consider it safe to undertake any other enterprise till he was finally delivered of his formidable antagonist; and even when the Russians were put entirely in possession of the fortress in the end of October, they got nothing but half-ruined walls and a deserted town, tenanted only by five hundred of the lowest of the people; while the long trains conveying the garrison and inhabitants, the real strength of

CHAP. LXIV.

1810.

Roudschouck, to the southward, formed an army in the field little less formidable than it had been behind its blood-stained ramparts. A deplorable catastrophe, characteristic of the envenomed character of these semi-religious wars, took place at the same period. Kaminski, disquieted at the prolonged resistance of Roudschouck, and the intelligence of great armaments at Constantinople, dispatched orders to General St Priest, in command at Sistowa, to destroy that town, and bring all his forces to the main army. These orders, dictated in a moment of groundless alarm, were too faithfully executed: Sistowa was reduced to a heap of ruins; its inhabitants, twenty thousand in number, transported to the opposite side of the Danube, where they were sheltered from the drenching rains in huts newly-constructed; great flocks of wild pigeons settled in the ruins of this once flourishing town; and its smiling environs, composed of vine-clad hills, intermingled with roses, were soon choked by weeds, and tenanted only by the wild foxes from the neighbouring solitudes.[1]* [1] Val. 139, 142. Jom. 467.

Conclusion of the campaign. Oct. 29.

It was necessary, however, to do something to give eclat to the conclusion of the campaign; and for this reason, the siege of Nicopolis was undertaken, a considerable town on the southern bank of the Danube, though not so flourishing as Sistowa had been.

* A singular proof of the extraordinary fertility of the soil, and its adaptation for the cultivation of the vine, occurred at Roudchouck at this period. The whole slopes in its vicinity are covered with vines, which grow in that district with such luxuriance, that though the besieging army had feasted on them for some weeks before the armistice began, yet the inhabitants there, during its continuance, reaped a very fair crop from their gardens. The combined efforts of two armies were unable to consume the profuse fruit of a few miles square. The vine, which is there indigenous, grows with such tenacity on the slopes, that it is hardly possible, by any efforts of cultivation, to extirpate it.—VALENTINI, 47.

CHAP. LXIV.

1810. Kaminski, accordingly, sat down before it with thirty thousand men, while the indefatigable Bosniak Aga approached Tirnova with seventeen thousand who had followed his standard from Roudchouck, and soon formed the basis of a respectable army. The commander of that place, however, shut his gates against such formidable guests; and Bosniak at length found refuge in Plewne, while the Pacha of Giurgevo was received in Tirnova. Meanwhile,

Dec. 12. Nicopolis capitulated, and the Russians re-crossed the Danube, and took up their winter-quarters for the most part in Wallachia and Moldavia, leaving three divisions only on the right bank at Nicopolis, Roudschouck, and Silistria. Soon after, the Cabinet of St Petersburg, worn out with this endless war of sieges, in which they frequently combated at a disadvantage, and foreseeing a formidable struggle nearer home, where they would need all their strength, sent orders to Kaminski to destroy all the fortified places on the right bank of the Danube, with the exception of Roudschouck, which was to be retained only as a *tête-du-pont*. In pursuance of these directions, the walls of Silistria and Nicopolis were blown up, and Roudchouck put in a respectable posture of defence; but before any offensive operations could be commenced, Kaminski was seized with the malady of which he soon after died; and he was succeeded by an officer destined to immortal celebrity in a more glorious war—GENERAL KUTUSOFF.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 467. Val. 141, 151.

The campaign of 1811, however, of necessity was laid out upon a defensive plan merely; for although the Russian army had been reinforced in the early part of the winter by a strong division under General Suwarrow, son of the great marshal of the same

name, in consequence of which, Kaminski, before his illness rendered him unfit for service, had made a vigorous winter march against Loweza, which was surprised and taken with four thousand men, in the depth of winter; yet immediately afterwards, the relations between the cabinet of St Petersburg and that of the Tuilleries became so menacing, that the Emperor Alexander gave orders for five divisions of the army to break up from their winter-quarters on the Danube, and direct their march, not towards the Balkan and Constantinople, but to Poland and the Vistula. This great deduction at once reduced the Russians to one-half of their former amount; and with fifty thousand men merely, it was not only impossible for Kutusoff to prosecute offensive operations to the south of the Danube, but difficult for him even to maintain his footing on the south of that river in the few strongholds of which they still retained possession. Encouraged by this great diminution in the strength of their enemies, and thoroughly roused by the dangers they had incurred in the preceding campaign, the Turkish Government made the most vigorous efforts for the prosecution of the war, and not only put themselves at all points into a good posture of defence, but prepared to take advantage of the weakness of their enemies, and regain all the strongholds which they had lost on the right bank of the Danube. Achmet Pasha, who had gained such renown at the assault of Brahilow, commanded the main army, which numbered sixty thousand combatants, with seventy-eight pieces of artillery admirably equipped: he advanced in the middle of June towards Roudschouck at the head of this imposing force, while at the same time a corps of twenty thousand men was detached to the

CHAP. LXIV.

1811.

Great draft of troops from the Danube to Poland. Jan. 19. Feb. 1811.

CHAP. LXIV.

1811.

left, towards Widdin, to keep in check Czerny George and the Servians, and nearly the same number to the right, to observe Silistria, Nicopolis, and Tourtoukai, and occupy any of these places which might be evacuated by the enemy.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 542. Val. 150, 152.

Battle of Roudschouck.

It affords a strong proof of the native vigour, which, despite the innumerable errors of their political institutions, animated the Turkish empire, that they were capable, in the third year of the war, and without any external aid, of putting forth such formidable forces. Their approach immediately made Kutusoff concentrate his troops, and he himself crossed the Danube, and took post with eighteen thousand men in front of Roudschouck. As the superiority of the enemy, especially in cavalry, was so great, the Russian general remained on the defensive, and awaited their approach in the regular squares, which had so often dissipated the innumerable hordes of the Osmanli horse. The attack of the Ottomans was made in their usual manner—charging with loud shouts these squares on three sides at once; but in the tumult of the onset, and when the infantry were in a manner encircled by their enemies, the discernment of the Grand Vizier had prepared a separate corps which was to penetrate into the town, This able plan all but succeeded. The Turkish guns, admirably directed, ploughed through the Russian squares, while the spahis, in every quarter, threw themselves upon them with impetuosity over the whole position. The squares on the right, where they had the advantage of having one flank secured by the precipitous banks of the river Lomin, withstood the shock; but the centre suffered severely from the cannonade of the Turkish batteries, and the left was wellnigh swept away by the torrent of their in-

July 2.

comparable horse. Kutusoff brought up his cavalry to keep at a distance the increasing squadrons of the spahis; but then was seen how inadequate the European is to the encounter of the Asiatic horse. In a moment the advancing mass of the Muscovites and Cossacks was charged in flank, pierced through, and overthrown. Four regiments were almost destroyed; and the Ottoman horsemen, deeming the victory won, dashed through the intervals of the squares with deafening cries, disregarding the fire which assailed them on either flank, and penetrated in the rear even as far as the gardens of the town. All seemed lost; and if the Grand Vizier had had infantry at hand to support his cavalry, it would have been so. But the gallant horsemen, having no aid from foot-soldiers, were unable to establish themselves in the fortress; the grape-shot from the ramparts shook their ranks, and they were compelled to retreat through the steady squares, who stood immovable as if rooted to the ground, and again poured in a deadly volley on either side of their now diminished squadrons. This completed the discomfiture of the Turks, who took refuge in their intrenched camp; but although Kutusoff, seeing the field deserted, advanced to the front of its rampart, he did not venture to storm the works, and soon after withdrew within the walls of Roudschouck, with the loss of three thousand men, the Turks being weakened by at least an equal number.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 543. Val. 152, 155.

Though this memorable battle was highly honourable to the discipline and intrepidity of the Russians, considering the great numerical superiority of their enemies, and the admirable quality of their cavalry, yet it convinced Kutusoff of the impossibility of maintaining his footing on the right bank of the

Evacuation of Roudschouck by the Russians.

CHAP. LXIV. 1811.

Danube. The extensive works of Roudschouck required a garrison of at least ten thousand men—nearly half the disposable force of which he had the command. He wisely resolved, therefore, to prefer a campaign in the field, where the discipline of his troops might give them the advantage, to the murderous contest behind walls, where the Turks were so formidable; and abandoning to his antagonist the object of so much bloodshed, withdrew from Roudschouck after barbarously burning the town, and crossed over entirely to the left bank of the river. Bosniak Aga, amidst the pomp of Oriental power and the clang of military instruments, again took possession of the ramparts which he had so nobly defended; the fugitive inhabitants of the fortress returned in joyful crowds to their much-loved and long-deserted homes; the standards of Mahomet were again displayed from the battlements; the beautiful vineyards in the environs were cleared out and dressed by the hands of their owners; and, contrary to the order of things for above a century, the Crescent appeared triumphant over the Cross.[1]

[1] Val. 156, 158. Jom. iii. 543.

The Turks cross the Danube. Sept. 8.

Overjoyed at this great success, the Grand Vizier determined to cross the Danube, and expel the Russians from all the Turkish territory which they held in Wallachia and Moldavia. After six weeks spent in repairing the fortifications of Roudschouck, and collecting forces on all sides, the passage was effected in the night of the 8th September; the Grand Vizier having with great skill drawn the attention of their antagonists to a feigned point of passage, whereby the real one was overlooked. No sooner, however, was the passage discovered, than the Russians under Boulatoff, who were nearest at hand, commenced an assault on the Ottomans; but the latter, with great skill, had al-

ready thrown up some rude works: the thick brushwood with which they were surrounded, prevented the advance of the Muscovites in masses; the Ottomans maintained their wonted superiority in bush-fighting; batteries, erected on some heights on the right bank, spread death through the Russian ranks, and under cover of their fire the passage was continued with such vigour, that by noon six thousand men, almost all janissaries, and six pieces of cannon, were established on the left bank. Boulatoff, however, was not to be discouraged: having received reinforcements, which raised his force to eight thousand men, he hazarded a third assault, but with no better success; and, after losing two thousand of his best troops in this murderous contest, besides a gun and a standard, the Russians retired, and the Turks, with deafening shouts and sabre in hand, sallied out of their intrenchments, and cut off the heads of the slain and unfortunate wounded.[1]

[1] Val. 159, 160. Jom. iii. 543.

General Sabinejef, during these events, had succeeded in forcing his way through the brushwood, and established a battery within half cannon-shot of the Turkish intrenchment on the left bank, which effectually cut off all communication between it and the remainder of the army on the right; but Kutusoff ordered this advanced position to be abandoned in the night; and issuing orders, in all directions, to concentrate round the outside of the intrenchment, brought up his flotilla to cannonade the enemy on the northern shore. But it was too late for success in this way; the enemy were now solidly established on the left bank; the flotilla was so roughly handled by the Turkish artillery, that one of its number sunk in the river; the passage of troops continued incessantly, and by the 18th thirty thousand men, with

The Turks strengthen their position. Sept. 10.

Sept. 12.

CHAP. LXIV. 1811.

fifty pieces of cannon, were established on the left bank, in a large intrenched camp, with redoubts at its angles; while an equal force on the right, under

Sept. 18. the Grand Vizier in person, had established a sort of city, in which his tent was conspicuous, decked out with unusual splendour. At this period the Russians around the intrenchments were so weak, that if Achmet Pasha had fallen vigorously on his opponents, he would probably have gained such decisive success as would have restored Wallachia and Moldavia to the Ottoman arms. But the precious time, big with such portentous events, was consumed in erecting intrenchments round the troops which had passed over; and, in the mean time, two strong divisions of infantry and a large body of Cossacks came up, which raised the Russian force to thirty-

Sept. 20. five thousand men. Kutusoff now resolved to take advantage of the exposed situation of the enemy, and, if possible, by cutting off the communication of those passed over to the right, compel them to surrender.

Sept. 21. He allowed the Turks, accordingly, after severe fighting, to extend their camp, and even erect a redoubt a mile in advance of its former limits; but while his troops were lost in astonishment at the supineness of their general, he was preparing, with the secrecy and finesse peculiar to his character, the means of involving the enemy in a signal calamity.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 543. Val. 161, 165.

Kutusoff's measures to circumvent the enemy.

The intention of the Grand Vizier was to have gradually pushed his troops forward, covering themselves with intrenchments and redoubts as they advanced, till he got possession of the village of Malka, about two miles further on, where there were considerable magazines, which he meant also to fortify, and thereby acquire a solid footing on the northern bank. To defeat this project, the Russian general, on the

night of the 29th, erected four large redoubts in an exterior circle around the Ottoman camp, and these were soon succeeded by eight more. Alarmed at the progress of this line of circumvallation, which, in the form of a semicircle, enclosed their camp with both ends resting on the Danube, the Turks, after several bloody combats, erected a new redoubt near the river, to cover their communication with the southern shore; but the Russians stormed it before the works were finished, and put the garrison, consisting of four hundred Albanians, to the sword. A sally of the Ottomans, immediately made to regain this important post, was repulsed with the loss of above fifteen hundred men. After this severe check the Turks remained quietly within their intrenchments, while the Russian general erected a ninth redoubt on his extreme right near the Danube, which completed the investiture of the Turkish camp, and considerably straitened their communications with the opposite bank of the river.[1]

Sept. 29.

Oct. 3.

Oct. 4.

[1] Val. 165, 167. Jom. iii. 543.

As long, however, as the Ottomans had a communication of any sort open with the other side, it was impossible that they could be reduced to any serious difficulties for want of provisions, and Kutusoff was therefore tempted to hazard an expedition to the other bank, in order, if possible, to dislodge the enemy from the ground on the opposite side, from whence the Grand Vizier's camp was supplied with food and reinforcements. This important operation was intrusted to General Markoff, who, with ten thousand men, set out from the Russian camp, after dark, on the night of the 10th October, and succeeded, early the next morning, in throwing his light troops and Cossacks across. The flotilla, which had been ordered to the point in order to transport across the main body,

Surprise and total defeat of the Turks on the right bank.

Oct. 10.

CHAP. LXIV.

1811.

could not get down, from the violence of the current; in consequence of which their passage was delayed for twenty-eight hours, and was not effected till the morning of the 13th. During this time the greatest anxiety prevailed at headquarters, where very scanty information of their proceedings had been received; but, strange to say, though the point where the Russians had been disembarked on the right bank was not above six miles from the Ottoman camp there, it re-

Oct. 13.

mained entirely unknown to its generals. Kutusoff's disquietude, however, was at length dissipated. Markoff having got over ten battalions and five hundred horse, proceeded instantly to the attack of the Turkish camp on the right bank, leaving the remainder to continue their passage. The surprise was complete—the Turks, never dreaming of being assailed on their own side, made scarcely any resistance; the civil functionaries of the Grand Vizier, the merchants and traders who thronged the encampment, took to flight in the utmost consternation, and, not deeming themselves in safety at Roudschouck, which had been stripped of nearly all its heavy artillery for the use of the camp, took the road for Rasgrad and Schumla. The magnificent tents of the Grand Vizier, the whole baggage and stores of the army, an immense number of horses, camels, and carriages, and prodigious booty, fell into the hands of the victors, who did not lose eight men in this felicitous attack. Markoff, however, without casting a thought on the booty, seized the Turkish batteries, which he turned against the enemy on the other side, where the remainder of the Russian army were drawn up in battle array, wit-

Val. 169, 173. Jom. iii. 543, 544.

nesses of his triumph; and, while eighty pieces of cannon thundered against the Ottoman camp, demanded with loud cries to be led to the assault.[1]

CHAP. LXIV.

1811.

Had Kutusoff possessed the daring of Alexander or Cæsar, he would have taken advantage of the enthusiasm of the moment and the consternation of the enemy, and instantly led his troops to the attack of the intrenched camp on the left bank; and there can be little doubt that, if this had been done, it would have been carried, and the whole Turkish army destroyed. But his genius was essentially cautious; and he never would owe to hazard what he hoped to gain by combination. Repressing, therefore, the ardour of his troops, he contented himself with a furious cannonade; and meanwhile, the Grand Vizier himself, who was on the right bank, escaped in a boat to Roudschouck, after in vain proposing an armistice with a view to negotiations for peace. The Pasha Tschappau-Oglou, son of one of the richest princes of Asia Minor, then took the command, and, by his firmness and resources in the most trying circumstances, extorted the admiration even of his enemies. The circumstances of the Turks were wholly desperate. The Russian artillery, now augmented to two hundred pieces of cannon, on the opposite sides of the Danube, kept up an incessant fire upon them night and day: a strong flotilla, both above and below, precluded all access or escape by water: a formidable semicircle of redoubts, with batteries in their interstices, enclosed them on the land side; their provisions were soon exhausted; forage there was none for their horses; their tents were burned for fuel; and the troops, during the damp nights of autumn, lay on the open ground, exposed to the ceaseless tempest of shot. Yet all these accumulated horrors could not shake the firm mind of the Turkish general. He repeatedly refused the most advantageous offers of capitulation; and after having consumed his last

Surrender of the Turkish army on the right bank.

CHAP. LXIV. 1811.

horses, he was forming the audacious project of cutting his way by a sudden irruption through the Russian left, and intrenching himself opposite to Roudschouck, and under the shelter of its guns, when a convention concluded at Giurgevo, in the end of October, with a view to a peace between the two powers, put an end to the miseries, and saved the honour, of these brave men.[1]

[1] Jom. iii. 544. Val. 173, 175. Oct. 28.

It was stipulated that they should be fed from the Russian magazines till their fate was finally determined by the plenipotentiaries of the two powers, then assembled at Giurgevo—a condition which was faithfully performed; and on the 4th December they finally quitted their camp, in virtue of a convention by which they were to evacuate it, without their arms or cannon, and be quartered in the villages in the neighbourhood of Bucharest, on condition of having them restored only if peace was concluded.

Dec. 3.

The Russians immediately entered their blood-stained intrenchments, the object of such desperate strife; and their interior told how dreadful had been the sufferings of their heroic defenders. The ground was strewed with the dead bodies of men and horses, which the survivors had not possessed sufficient strength to inter; limbs struck off by the cannon-shot, broken arms, overturned gun-carriages, and putrid corpses, lay on all sides; the earth even was ploughed up in many places by the shot; but the survivors, though pale and emaciated, still preserved their calm and resolute air. Five thousand, amidst the respect of their enemies, delivered up their arms, with fifty-one guns; above twelve thousand had perished, by disease or the sword, since the cannonade commenced.[2]

[2] Val. 175, 176.

This concluded the operations of the campaign,

CHAP. LXIV.

1811.

and put an end to this bloody war, in which both parties had made prodigious efforts, and neither had gained decisive success. In Little Wallachia, Ismael Bey had invaded the Russian side of the river with thirty thousand men; and General Sass, who commanded in that quarter with very inferior forces, was at one period so hard pressed, that Kutusoff in the middle of September sent him orders to evacuate the province entirely, and join him in his camp before the Grand Vizier; but that general, with admirable skill, maintained his ground, defeated the enemy in several partial encounters, and at length compelled him to retire back to the right bank about the same time that the great disaster befell the army of the Grand Vizier in the neighbourhood of Roudschouck.[1]

Conclusion of the campaign in Little Wallachia.

Sept. 16.

[1] Val. 176, 177. Jom. iii. 544.

Negotiations in good earnest were carried on for peace; for both parties were sincerely desirous of an accommodation. The Russians, well aware of the formidable contest which was impending over them with Napoleon, were anxious at any price to terminate the hostilities on the Danube, and bring Kutusoff's force to the assistance of the grand armies on the Niemen. At first sight, it might have been supposed, that what it was so much the interest of the Russians to obtain, it could not be for the advantage of the Turks to concede: but in this instance it was otherwise, and the good sense of the Turks triumphed over all the efforts which the French ambassador, Latour Maubourg, made to retain them in hostilities with Russia. By a singular but just retribution, all the powers whose ambassadors or envoys assisted at these conferences, were either threatened by, or had been offered a share of, Napoleon's spoliations; and their concurring testimony removed all doubt from the minds of the Turkish

Peace of Bucharest. May 28, 1812.

CHAP. LXIV. 1811.

ministers as to the imminent danger to which they would be exposed if Napoleon should obtain the same supremacy in Western, which he had long enjoyed in Eastern Europe. The English made them acquainted with the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, already mentioned,* whereby, in consideration of the fidelity with which they had adhered to his fortunes during the war in Poland; and through the disasters of Eylau, the French Emperor had not only agreed to the entire partition of their European dominions, Constantinople and Roumelia alone excepted, but had actually stipulated the largest shares, viz. Greece, the islands of the Archipelago, Albania, and Macedonia, to himself. Russia, a party to that scheme of plunder, and intimately acquainted with all its details, revealed them fully to the Turkish ambassadors; the secret conferences of Erfurth were made known, and documents bearing the official signatures of the French plenipotentiaries, were exhibited to them by Kutusoff, which left no doubt of the truth of their representations; Austria disclosed the offer made to her of Servia and Bosnia, if she would concur in the partition; while Czerny George, alarmed at the clear proofs which had been adduced of the intention to dethrone him in the scramble, gave ample details of the inquiries and surveys made by Marshal Marmont immediately after the treaty of Tilsit, to ascertain the most expedient mode of effecting the conquest of the French share in the partition.† Struck by the concurring representations of all these powers, and the clear evidence which was adduced to support them, the Divan no longer hesitated; the Turks saw clearly, that if Napoleon gained the mastery of Russia, he would instantly turn the

* *Ante*, vi. 299. † *Ibid.* 304.

force of both empires against them—that Moscow would be but a step to Constantinople.* They strove hard for a considerable time to obtain restitution of all the provinces conquered by the Russians in the beginning of the war to the north of the Danube; but finding the Russians resolute to retain, at least, the provinces to the east of the Pruth, and rather to run the hazard of a continuance of the war than consent to their restoration, they at length agreed to allow that river to form the boundary of the two nations, and peace was concluded on these terms in the end of May. The treaty with Turkey was speedily followed by one with Great Britain, which was signed on the 18th July. By the first treaty, although the Cabinet of St Petersburg lost Wallachia and Moldavia, which they had declared part of their empire, they gained Bessarabia, which gave them the inappreciable advantage, in a contest both with Turkey and Austria, of commanding the mouths of the Danube; and Admiral Tchichagoff, who had been sent from St Petersburg to conclude the treaty, as Kutusoff's proceedings were esteemed too dilatory, set off from Bucharest for the Vistula on the 31st July, at the head of forty thousand men, who appeared with fatal effect on the great theatre of Europe at the passage of the Beresina.[1]

May 28, 1812.

[1] Jom. iii. 545. Val. 178, 180. See the treaty in Martin, iii. 397, 226.

Napoleon has repeatedly said that the folly of the Turks in making peace at Bucharest with the Russians, their hereditary enemies, was such, that it altogether exceeded the bounds of reasonable calculation; and therefore that he was not to be blamed

Reasons which induced the Turks to conclude this peace.

* "Made aware, by my enemies, of the stipulations of Erfurth, and by Austria of the *project* for the partition of Turkey which I had proposed to her, the Turks abandoned themselves, without reserve, to the counsels of England. The British ambassador soon resumed all his former credit with the Divan."—JOMINI.—NAPOLEON, iii. 545.

CHAP. LXIV. 1812.

for the disastrous consequences which flowed from the appearance of Tchichagoff's army in his rear when he lay at Moscow. In truth, however, the Turks were not, in this instance, so limited in their political vision as the French writers are desirous to represent; and their conduct in concluding that treaty was rather the result of that clear judgment and strong common sense, which, whenever the facts of a case are distinctly brought before them, has always distinguished the Ottoman councils. They knew well the hostility of Russia, and they had often experienced the weight of its arms; but they had felt the ingratitude of France; and the desertion of a friend sinks deeper into the breast than the enmity of a foe. They were aware of their danger from Muscovite ambition; but they were also no strangers to the power and designs of Napoleon: and they apprehended with reason immediate destruction from his power, if, by subjugating Russia, he was put in a situation to direct the whole resources of Europe against their devoted capital. They never forgot their desertion at Tilsit by the French Emperor, nor the unprovoked project of spoliation on his part which succeeded it; and justly feared that, though the mutual jealousy of the two Imperial Allies had hitherto preserved them from destruction, they could not look for a continuance of their respite if the forces of both were concentrated in one hand.

The vigorous and unlooked for resistance which Turkey at this period opposed to all the efforts of the Russians, sufficiently illustrates the elements of strength which at that period lay dormant, till roused by present danger, in the Ottoman empire; and may perhaps suggest the necessity of modifying some of those opinions as to the declining condition

of the power of the Grand Seignior, which have so long been received as political maxims in Europe. When it is recollected that Russia for three years directed her whole force against the Turks; that, in the year 1810, she had a hundred thousand men upon the Danube; and that this array was composed of the conquerors of Eylau, it certainly appears not a little surprising that the Ottoman empire was not overthrown altogether in the shock. Nevertheless, the contest was extremely equal; and though the forces with which the Ottomans had to contend on the Danube fully equalled those which fronted Napoleon on the Vistula, yet they opposed nearly as effectual a resistance to the Muscovite arms as the conqueror of Western Europe. The contest began on the Danube, and it terminated, after three years' bloodshed, on the same river, with the loss of only one or two frontier towns to the Ottomans. This broad and decisive fact proves, that, although the political power of Turkey has unquestionably declined for the last century and a half, and the enormous abuses of its civil government have occasioned, during that period, a constant diminution in its inhabitants and strength, yet it still possesses great resources when they are fairly drawn forth by impending danger; and that in the native bravery of its inhabitants is often to be found, as in the English soldiers, more than a compensation for all the errors of their direction or government.

1812.

Character of Sultaun Mahmoud.

Sultaun Mahmoud, who attempted to arrest this decay, and draw forth, under more enlightened guidance, the still powerful resources of the Ottoman empire, was one of those remarkable men whose character has stamped a mighty impress on the age in which he lived. Albeit bred in the seclusion and

CHAP. LXIV. 1812.

effeminacy of the harem, he possessed the native courage and hardihood of his race; albeit little informed by education or social intercourse, he had sagacity enough to perceive the increasing inferiority of the Mahometan to the Christian empires, and courage to undertake what was thought to be the remedy. Instead of ascribing the decline of his dominions, like most of his countrymen, to the irresistible decrees of fate, and submitting to it with the apathy of a predestinarian, he set himself vigorously to avert the evil, and sought, by the destruction of the privileged classes, and the introduction of European discipline and usages, both in civil and military affairs, to communicate to his aged empire a portion of the energy of western civilisation. The contest with ancient habits, inveterate from custom, engrafted upon law, and sanctified by religion, was long and obstinate; and the catastrophe by which it was concluded, in the destruction of the janissaries in 1825, was one of the most awful recorded in history. Whatever the ultimate effect of that tremendous event may be, it stamped Mahmoud's character for all future ages, and bespoke the fearless energy, the undaunted courage, the unflinching rigour, which, braving the perils which had proved fatal to so many of his race, could thus subdue them all, and fix, by his single hand, a different impress upon the institutions of a vast empire.

Nevertheless Sultaun Mahmoud will not bear a comparison with Peter the Great; and the destruction of the janissaries will, to all appearance, be attended with very different effects from the overthrow of the Muscovite strelitzes. Mahmoud would never have been found in the workshop of Saardam: he was not at the head of his troops under the walls

of Varna, nor on the field of Koniah. Political regeneration, difficult in all, is impossible in Mahometan states: the religion and institutions of the Koran preclude the possibility of expansion or alteration; they are inconsistent with the adoption of improvement by foreign usages. The power of Turkey has been irrecoverably broken by the destruction of part and the alienation of the whole of the janissary body; the national resources have been ruined, without the vigour of a different civilisation being acquired; the strength of Asia has been lost, without that of Europe being gained. Like the kingdom of Mysore, in Hindostan, the Ottoman empire has sunk to the earth in the attempt to substitute the military system of the West for that of the East. This, accordingly, appeared decisively in the next contest which ensued: the line of the Danube was no longer maintained; the Balkan ceased to be an impassable barrier; in two campaigns, Russia was at Adrianople; in one, the Pasha of Egypt was within a few days' march of Scutari. The janissaries were doubtless a serious evil, and they opposed an impenetrable barrier to every species of improvement; but they constituted the military strength of the nation, they were identified with its religious spirit, they were interwoven with its most venerable institutions. It is one thing to see that a disease has overspread a vital part of the frame; it is another and a very different thing to be able in mature life to cut it out. The real bond of union in every great empire is its religion; it is that which knits together the high and the low, the rich and the poor; it is that which constitutes its vital spirit. Change, even for the better, is generally fatal; the substitution of Christianity itself for heathenism, undoubtedly accelerated the fall of the

CHAP. LXIV. 1812.

Roman empire. Let every state which has attained mature years, and consolidated its power, beware of making a great change in its institutions, especially of a religious character. Even though those which are introduced may be preferable in the general case to those which are abandoned, it is rare that the transition can be made with safety; a certain character has been imprinted by the hand of nature upon every old established nation, as upon every full-grown individual, and any considerable change will only accelerate the descent of both to the grave.

CHAPTER LXV.

ACCESSION OF BERNADOTTE TO THE SWEDISH THRONE, AND CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE RUSSIAN WAR OF 1812.

1808—1812.

Greatness of Sweden in former times—Decline of Sweden from its Ancient Celebrity—Description of the Scandinavian Peninsula—Character of the Swedes—Their Political Institutions—Unprovoked Attack upon them by the Emperor Alexander after the Treaty of Tilsit—Brave determination of the Swedes to Resist—Commencement of the War—Capture of Sweaborg and Conquest of Finland—Consternation Produced in Sweden by this Event, and General Wish for a Change of Government—Dethronement of Gustavus—Peace with Russia—Intrigues for the Election of the Crown-Prince—Part which France and Russia took in the Transaction—Election of Bernadotte—His History and Character—Continued Encroachments of Napoleon in Central and Northern Europe—Annexation of the Duchy of Oldenburg and the Hanse Towns to the French Empire—Jealousy of Russia—Her Apprehension of the Restoration of Poland—Russian Commercial Ukase in the end of 1810—Progress of the Angry Negotiations and Mutual Recriminations of the Two Courts—Birth of the King of Rome—Resolute Conduct of Napoleon on this Occasion—Napoleon's Military Preparations—His Treaty with Prussia—With Austria—Tyrannical Conduct of Napoleon towards Bernadotte—The Multiplied Grievances of Sweden, and Angry Correspondence with France—Inclination of Sweden towards Russia and England—Treaty with the Former of these Powers—Napoleon's Proposals of Peace to England—Answer of Great Britain—War becomes inevitably the Ultimatum of Russia—Feelings in Europe on the Approaching Conflict.

CHAP. LXV.

1808.

In former days, Sweden maintained a distinguished place in the European commonwealth; and she can number among her sons some of the most illustrious men whom modern times have produced. The Goths, who spread through Poland and the Ukraine into the Roman provinces, and appeared as suppliants on the banks of the Danube, from whence they were ferried across by Roman hands never to return, originally came from the southern part of the Scandina-

Greatness of Sweden in former times.

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

vian peninsula; and the province of Gothland still attests the original seat of the conquerors of Rome. On many occasions, their descendants, who remained in their native plains, have caused their prowess to be felt, and their virtues respected, by the neighbouring nations, and interfered with decisive effect in the most interesting contests in which Europe has been engaged. The name of Gustavus Vasa is still repeated in every civilized tongue, among the patriot heroes whose actions have contributed to bless mankind; Protestant Europe will ever acknowledge, with gratitude, the inestimable services rendered to the great cause of religious, and through it of civil freedom, by the heroic valour and great warlike abilities of Gustavus Adolphus; and the interest of youth to the end of the world will be fascinated by the marvellous story of Charles XII.; while the student of the military art will study with care the history of those wonderful abilities which enabled the little kingdom of Sweden, with hardly two millions of souls, to render its armies a match, and at one period more than a match, for the gigantic strength of Russia, led by the consummate talents of Peter the Great. Nor has science less reason to acknowledge the lustre with which the light of Swedish genius has illuminated the long night of the arctic circle: for she gave birth to Copernicus, who first discovered the true system of the planetary motions, and in Linnæus she has for ever unfolded the hidden key by which the endless variety of floral beauty is to be classified, and the mysterious link is preserved between vegetable and animal life.

Description of the Scandinavian peninsula.

But with the advent of times when greater empires were brought into the field, and the wars of nations came to be carried on by numerous standing

armies, drawn from the population and maintained by the resources of vast empires, Sweden was unable to continue in this elevated station. Her physical resources are wholly inadequate for such protracted efforts; and the attempt which Charles XII. made to engage her in long and arduous wars, so completely drained the resources of the country, that they did not recover the loss for half a century. The population of the Swedish monarchy in 1808, including Finland, was hardly three millions, and these scanty numbers were scattered over so vast an extent of surface, above three times that of the British isles, as greatly diminished the national efficiency in external warfare. The country, however, possesses great natural advantages. Though the climate, from its situation, is rigorous in winter, yet it is often less so than might have been supposed in so northern a latitude; the cold damp fogs of Germany are wanting; the bottoms of the valleys in Gothland and the southern provinces, which are the residence of two-thirds of the inhabitants of the country, are capable of producing admirable crops of wheat, barley, and oats; rich pastures are to be found on the hill sides; and the vast mountain ranges which it contains, are clothed with noble forests of pine, birch, and oak. A lofty range of mountains, rivalling the Alps in grandeur and elevation, intersects the whole Scandinavian peninsula, nearly from the North Cape

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

	Square Miles.	Population.
* Sweden Proper now contains, in	200,000	2,800,000
Finland, ...	102,432	1,380,000
Total in 1826, . . .	302,432	3,680,000
Do. in 1808, about		3,000,000
Population per square mile,	14	
Do. in England, . . .	260	

—Malte Brun, viii. 561, 565; and vi. 631.

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

to the waters of the Sound, and forms the eternal barrier between Sweden and Norway; but the descent to the Baltic is more gradual than that to the German ocean, and a much greater quantity of level and arable land is to be found than in the mountain clefts and alpine vales which inclose the happy Norwegian peasantry. The level part of Sweden is intersected in many places by long ridges of granite rock of no great elevation, which form, as it were, the natural walls of its beautiful valleys; but within these rude barriers, beautiful spots of verdure and rich fields are to be found, while rich woods of beech and oak frequently clothe their base. A vast number of inland lakes, easily susceptible of artificial communication, both diversify the scene in the interior, and furnish the means of an extensive inland commerce; rich iron mines have long poured a perennial stream of wealth into Dalecarlia; and farther to the north, where the rigour of the climate almost precludes the raising of grain crops, the bounty of nature has given a short but warm summer, which brings to maturity the richest pastures, and innumerable lakes and mountain torrents, which furnish acceptable stores for the long winter; nor is a more delightful picture of human happiness any where to be found than in those woody recesses where human industry has cleared out a few green spots amidst the surrounding gloom, and primeval man dwells in plenty and contentment.[1]

[1] Clarke's Travels. ix. 172. Malte Brun, viii. 537, 549.

—— Inter aquas
Nemorumque noctem.

Political circumstances of the Swedes.

The political circumstances of this highly interesting country are not less favourable than its physical advantages. The ancient free spirit of the north, that noble spirit which has spread the Euro-

pean race through every part of the world, and is ultimately destined to subdue it, has always flourished in its native seats. From the earliest times, Sweden has enjoyed the advantage of a free constitution and representative form of government; and although the want of considerable towns and the absence of the mercantile genius, over the greater part of their territory, has prevented the vigour of the proper democratic spirit from rising among them, yet the rural cultivators have always preserved in a high degree the sturdy spirit of Gothic freedom. The monarch is hereditary; but his power is defined and limited by the constitution. The states of the realm must concur in all laws; they are exclusively vested with the right of laying on taxes and managing the public. They consist of four orders: the noblesse, in which each noble family has a representative; the clergy, represented by the bishops and certain deputies from the rural pastors; the burgesses, chosen by the several burghs; and the representatives of the peasants, elected by themselves in open assemblies. The people are universally educated; landed property, especially in the northern provinces, is very much divided among them; and no country in the world possesses, in proportion to its population, a greater number of clergy, who instruct the people in the pure tenets of the Protestant religion. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, of all others the most favourable for the development of the principles of freedom, and despite the presence of a House of Peasants, peculiar, of all the European monarchies, to Sweden and Norway, many of its monarchs have ruled the country almost with unlimited authority; and it is only since the constitution was settled in 1772, that the requisite boundaries

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

of power have been ascertained: while the luminous fact, that the states, except on particular emergencies, assemble only once in five years, demonstrates how far the popular part of the constitution is from having yet attained the importance and consideration which it long ago acquired in the commercial realm of Great Britain; and may teach us how materially the practice of government sometimes differs from its theory, and how much real freedom is dependent on the spirit and energy of the people, rather than the mere forms of the constitution.[1]

[1] Malte Brun, viii. 557, 558.

Character of the Swedes.

Industry, till of late years, was very little drawn forth in Sweden. In 1828 there were only seven thousand manufacturers in the whole country, and three thousand traders; a state of things which amply explains the distant intervals at which the states are assembled, and the great functions which, in the practical administration of government, have come to be devolved on the sovereign and royal council. But the national character is admirable, and the manners of the people, except in one unhappy particular, worthy of general imitation. Brave, kind-hearted, and hospitable, sincere in their devotion, enlightened in their intellects, gentle in their disposition, obedient to the laws, and yet jealous of their own rights; the Swedish peasantry exhibit as fair a specimen of European rural civilisation as is to be met with in the whole domains of the family of Japhet. But one fatal indulgence has wellnigh obliterated all these advantages, and let in upon this simple, kind-hearted people, the whole catalogue of human sins. Drinking is universal: the liberty of distilling in every separate house, on paying a trifling duty to government for the right to use a still, has from time immemorial

been established among the whole peasantry of the country; and at this moment there are no less than one hundred and fifty thousand of these manufactories of "liquid hell-fire," as it has been well denominated, which distil annually *thirty millions* of gallons of spirits for the consumption of three millions of people! The consequences of this calamitous facility in producing and obtaining spirituous liquors, have been to the last degree disastrous. Notwithstanding the small number of manufactures which are established in the country, the general simplicity of rural life, the absence of great towns, and the moderate size of its capital, which contains only eighty thousand inhabitants, the average amount of crime over all Sweden equals that of the most depraved cities in Great Britain. The illegitimate births are to the legitimate, over the whole country, as one to thirteen; while in the capital they have reached the astonishing number of one to two and three-tenths, exceeding even that of Paris itself! So completely does this destructive passion inflame the blood, and generate crime, even in the coldest latitudes; so perfectly is it adequate to counteract all the efforts of reason, prudence, morality, and religion; and so deplorably fallacious is the system, which, proceeding on the mistaken assumption that the people will of themselves abstain from such enjoyments as are pernicious, allows them to manufacture, without limit, for themselves, this most seducing and dreadful of all physical and moral poisons.[1]*

[1] Malte Brun, viii. 565. Laing's Sweden, 322, 113. 323,

* The illegitimate births in Sweden, over the whole country, are to the legitimate as one to thirteen.—Malte Brun, viii. 565. In Middlesex it is one to thirty-eight; over all England, one to twenty.—Porter, i. 21. The proportion of serious crime over Gothland, to the whole population, is as one to four hundred and eighty-four. In Glasgow, in the year 1839, it was as one to four hundred and ninety-six. Over all Sweden, the persons committed for all offences, serious

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

The Scandinavian peninsula, now happily united in one monarchy, numbering about four millions and a half of souls in its united territory, increasing at the rate, as it now does, of doubling in sixty years,[1] and separated from Russia by the impassable deserts which surround the gulf of Bothnia, and from all the rest of the world by the encircling ocean, may reasonably hope, with the aid of England, to be ultimately able to maintain its independence; but the case was widely different in 1808, when Norway formed part of a separate and hostile power, and the valuable possessions of the Swedish crown on the other side of the Baltic, lay close to the metropolis and power of Russia. The cabinet of St Petersburg had long beheld with covetous eyes this valuable province running up, as it were, to the very gates of their capital, embracing the noble fortress of Sweaborg, the key to the northern part of the Baltic in its territory, and alone wanting to render that inland sea the boundary of their dominions from the mouths of the Vistula to the provinces bordering on the frozen ocean. They had never forgotten, that in the last war with Sweden the cannon of the Swedish fleet had been heard by the Empress Catharine in her own palace at St Petersburg; and they were feelingly alive to the insult as well as danger to which their capital would be always exposed, while it was situated so close to the territory of a neighbouring and sometimes hostile power. It has been already men-

Unprecedented attack upon Sweden by Russia.

[1] Malte Brun, viii. 565.

In 1789.

Feb. 6, 1808.

and trifling, are one in one hundred and seventy, a greater proportion than either England or Scotland.—LAING's *Sweden*, 112, 113, 323. Mr Laing's work on this subject, though valuable in many respects, is, however, entirely fallacious, if not examined by a person familiar with the subject, from its comparing the total committals in Sweden with the committals for trial in England and Scotland; keeping out of view the summary committals in the latter countries, which are at least five times as numerous.

tioned, accordingly, that the cabinet of St Petersburg lost no time in declaring war against Sweden early in 1808, and immediately invading Finland with a large portion of the troops who had been rendered disposable by the termination of the war in Poland; although they could assign no better reason for their hostility than the honourable adherence of the court of Stockholm to those principles and that cause which they themselves had so recently embraced, and from which they had only been driven by the untoward issue of the battle of Friedland.* But the real reason was the agreement formed by the two Emperors at Tilsit for the division of the continent between them; and that Alexander had got a *carte blanche* as to Finland and Turkey, in consideration of Napoleon getting the same as to the Spanish peninsula.

Brave determination of the Swedes to resist the commencement of the war.

However much the patriot historians of Sweden, whose first duty is to have the interests of their country chiefly at heart, may with reason regret the determination which the Swedish monarch at this crisis adopted of holding out, and at all hazards standing by his engagements, the general historian of Europe cannot but regard it as a signal instance of magnanimity, and such as, if it had been general among crowned heads and their ministers, would have achieved, years before it actually occurred, the deliverance of Europe. In this determination the King was supported, with mournful resolution, by the Swedish nation and parliament, although the circumstances of Northern Europe left hardly any hope that they could succeed in braving the hostility of their colossal neighbours. In effect, it soon appeared that the determination of the Czar drew after it the hostility of all Northern Europe. Denmark

Feb. 28.

* *Ante*, vi. 489.

CHAP. LXV. declared war a few days after Buxhowden's proclamation on the part of Russia, and Prussia did the same on the 11th March. But the determination of the cabinet of St Petersburg, to unite Finland at all risks to their dominions, was the real motive which had led to the war; for on the 28th of the same month an imperial ukase appeared at St Petersburg, which bore—"We unite Finland, conquered by our arms, for ever to our empire, and command its inhabitants forthwith to take the oath of allegiance to our throne."[1]

1808.

March 11.

March 28.

[1] Hard. x. 277. Jom. iii. 73, 74.

Capture of Sweaborg, and conquest of Finland.

Although the Russians were very far indeed from having conquered Finland at the time when this audacious proclamation was issued, requiring its inhabitants, before any treaty had been signed, or any cession made by their legitimate monarch, to take the oath of allegiance to their new masters; yet the success of their arms had been such as to justify the belief that the whole provinces on the eastern shore of the Baltic would erelong be in their possession. The King of Sweden, brave, chivalrous, confiding even to excess, and believing that he would find the same good faith, at least in legitimate monarchs, which he felt in his own bosom, never could be brought to believe that he would become an object of hostility to Russia, merely because he continued faithful to his engagements, and the honour which he had pledged to that power. He had made, accordingly, very little preparation for the defence of Finland; and the Russian Government, well aware of that circumstance, resolved to precipitate the attack before he had awakened from his dream of high-minded but credulous simplicity. Early in February 1808, Buxhowden, disregarding the rigours of a winter of unusual severity, entered Finland at the head of an

Feb. 9, 1808.

army of twenty thousand Russians. The Swedish troops, in no condition to make head against so formidable an enemy, were obliged to retreat, and the fortresses of Trevastus, Helsingfors, and ultimately Abo, the capital of the province, fell into the hands of the invaders. In the harbour of the latter town the great fleet of Swedish galleys was burned to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. Encouraged by these successes, the Russian general approached Sweaborg, the Gibraltar of the north, a fortress of the first order, built upon seven rocky islands altogether detached from the shore, strongly fortified with seven hundred pieces of cannon on the ramparts; containing the great naval and military arsenal of Finland, and a harbour equal to any in the world for capaciousness and depth. It was garrisoned by three thousand regular troops, and an equal number of militia, under the command of Admiral Cronstedt, an officer who had hitherto bore an unblemished reputation. But it soon appeared that if Alexander hoped to rival his great predecessor of the same name in the ancient world by the lustre of his military exploits, he had not neglected the golden key by which his father, at little cost of blood or treasure, secured such important acquisitions to the Macedonian monarchy. The investment of Sweaborg commenced in the first week of March, when the still frozen waves of the Baltic permitted the troops to approach the walls on their icy surface; and after a pretence of a bombardment of three weeks, the governor shamefully surrendered at discretion.[1] By this great blow the Russians became masters, in addition to an impregnable fortress,* a noble har-

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

Feb. 21. March 2.

March 8.

April 6.

[1] Bign. vii. 351, 352. Jom. iii. 75, 76.

* His instructions were precise: to defend the fortress to the last extremity, and burn the flotilla rather than permit it to fall into the hands of the enemy.—*Mem. de* GUSTAVE ADOLPHE, 1814, p. 16.

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

bour, and vast arsenal of two thousand pieces of cannon on the ramparts and in the magazines, of a large flotilla, which the governor had orders to burn rather than suffer to fall into the hands of the enemy.

Consternation produced in Sweden by this event.

This dreadful blow, which at once gave the Russians a firm footing in Finland, where before the end of the campaign in that year their forces were augmented to forty thousand men, broke the heart of the Swedes; and the danger of their situation soon became apparent from the capture of the important islands of Aland and Gothland, which took place immediately after, whereby the Muscovites acquired, as it were, so many stepping-stones across the Baltic, from which they might menace the independence of Sweden itself. Universal consternation in consequence prevailed; nor was this feeling of disquietude diminished by observing how insensible the king was to the manifest danger of his situation. Instead of supporting the troops in Finland, who so gallantly bore up against treason at Sweaborg, and the overwhelming numbers of the enemy in the field, he first alienated the whole diplomatic body in Europe, by arresting, early in March, M. Alopaeus, the Russian minister at Stockholm—a violation of the law of nations, noways justified by the Muscovite invasion of Finland, as the ambassador, at least, had no share in that unjustifiable aggression; and next, dreaming of Charles XII. and the conquest of Norway, he actually assembled twenty thousand men for the subjugation of that kingdom. Nor was the depression produced by those untoward events, and the general coalition of Northern Europe against them, diminished by the unexpected turn which, in the course of the summer, events took in their favour. Aland and Gothland, which had yielded to the Russian arms, were retaken in May, as soon as the open-

March 3.

ing of the Baltic enabled the Swedish fleet, reinforced by a British squadron, to put to sea; and Admiral Bodiskow, with the Muscovite garrison, were made prisoners. General Klingspor also, at the head of the Swedish troops in Finland, after having retreated as far as Uleaborg, boldly resumed the offensive; turned fiercely on his pursuers, and reinforcing his army by a large body of gallant peasants, who fought with heroic valour to avert the dreaded Muscovite yoke, forced the Russians to retreat, defeated them in several encounters, captured ninety-nine pieces of cannon, and expelled them from the whole province of East Bothnia. At sea, also, the Swedish arms prevailed over those of Russia. Admiral Kanikoff set sail with the Muscovite fleet, and omitted no opportunity of attacking the Swedish squadron with superior forces; but the next day, the British fleet, under Sir James Saumarez, having joined the Swedes with some ships of the line, the Russian admiral was glad to make the best of his way to his own harbours. A chase ensued, in the course of which two British line-of-battle ships, under Sir Samuel Hood, took a Russian seventy-four gun ship; and the admiral having, with signal incapacity, taken refuge in the open harbour of Baltisch Port, on the Russian coast, his whole fleet might with ease have been destroyed; had not the British admiral prudently, and agreeably to his instructions, abstained from an act which, how glorious soever, might have inflamed the national feeling of Russia and converted a doubtful into a real enemy, and contented himself with blockading it there till the approach of winter obliged him to withdraw from the Baltic.[1]

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

May 17. July 7.

[1] Ann. Reg. 1808, 287. Bign. vii. 359, 365. Hard. x. 278.

The cabinet of St Petersburg strongly urged Napoleon to take an active part in the Swedish war, by means of the powerful force he possessed in Hol-

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

stein; and, in consequence of their representations, Bernadotte entered Zealand at the head of thirty thousand men, among whom were the Spanish corps of the Marquis of Romana, who were shortly after rescued from their thraldom, as already noticed, and restored to the patriot standards in the Peninsula.* The French Emperor, however, though abundantly willing to take his own share in the partition, had no desire to accelerate the period of Russia's obtaining hers; and he accordingly wrote from Bayonne to Caulaincourt, his ambassador at St Petersburg, —"I have nothing to gain by seeing the Russians at Stockholm." The British Government, however, who were not aware of this reluctance, were seriously apprehensive of the passage of the Sound by the French troops, and the entire subjugation of Sweden by the arms of France, and, therefore, they dispatched an expedition of ten thousand men, under Sir John Moore, to assist Sweden in resisting the combined powers, which arrived at Gothenberg in the middle of May. It was soon discovered, however, that the views of the British Government and the Swedish monarch were widely at variance as to the disposal of this force. Gustavus, full of chivalrous enthusiasm, no sooner saw so considerable a body of troops arrive to his assistance, than he began to dream of projects of foreign conquest; and proposed to the British general, either to employ them in a descent upon Zealand, with a view to the reduction of Copenhagen, or in an expedition against Norway, or in an attack on one of the fortresses on the coast of Finland, and subsequent operations for the recovery of that province. Moore's instructions, however, which were to expose his troops as little as was con-

British expedition to Sweden, and armistice while the king surrenders Finland.

Aug. 9.

May 22. Napoleon to Caulaincourt.

* *Ante*, vi. 784.

CHAP. LXV.

sistent with the maintenance of the independence of Sweden, and mainly to watch over the passage of the Sound by the French troops, would not permit him to engage in any of these enterprises; and after repairing to Stockholm, with a view to concert operations with the King, which proved impossible, he was recalled, with his troops, by the British Government, who perceived a more feasible object of continental operations in the Spanish peninsula, where they arrived, as already noticed, immediately after the battle of Vimiera.* The departure of the English expedition completed the discouragement of the Swedish nation, by plainly evincing that, in the estimation of that power, their cause was considered as hopeless, or their King impracticable: the glorious successes in the Gulf of Bothnia had shot only like a brilliant meteor through the gloom of their arctic night; the Russian Government, roused by their unexpected reverses, had poured immense reinforcements into Finland; Buxhowden, at the head of forty thousand men, compelled the Swedish troops again to retire, and by the end of October had nearly overrun the whole province; and the brave Klingspor, unable any longer to avert the stroke of fate, was compelled, in November, to sign a convention, in virtue of which the whole of Finland to the east of the Gulf of Bothnia, was ceded to the Russian forces.[1]

1808. July 17.

Nov. 19.

[1] Ann. Reg. 1808, 237, 238. Bign. vi. 357, 361. Hard. x. 278, 282. Jom. iii. 76, 78.

These calamitous events, which affected the Swedes the more sensibly from the warmth of their patriotic feelings, and their long exemption from political catastrophes, produced a very general opinion among the most influential classes, that a change on the throne had become indispensable. It soon became

General wish for a change of Government.

* *Ante*, vi. 777.

CHAP. LXV. 1809.

generally known that, undeterred by the loss of Pomerania and Finland, the brightest jewels in his crown, Gustavus was determined to disregard the convention concluded in Finland by his generals, and renew the war in the following year, as early as the season would admit; and the Swedes, seeing that the British expedition had left their shores, and that the whole forces of that power were engaged in the Peninsular contest, justly anticipated the entire subjugation of their country, and ruin of their independence, if the strife were any longer delayed. Influenced by these considerations, which the urgency of the case soon rendered general, and swayed also not a little by a suspicion as to the sanity of the monarch, which many symptoms had rendered more than doubtful, a general understanding, as in England in 1688, took place among all parties, and for a time suspended their political differences, viz., that the dethronement of the reigning monarch, and the elevation of his uncle, the Duke of Sudermania, to the throne had become indispensable; and this virtual, though not yet expressly formed conspiracy, soon acquired consistency, and became ripe for execution by the leading officers in the army engaged in it.[1]

[1] Bign. viii. 159, 160. Hard. x. 279, 280. Mem. de Charles Jean, i. 103, 104. par St Donat.

The real object of the conspirators was to obtain for Sweden the support of some foreign power able to support its independence against the united forces of France and Russia, and for this purpose they offered the crown to the Duke of Gloucester.[2] But the British Government wisely declined, at so critical a moment, an acquisition, which, how flattering soever to the national character, was likely, in the end, to embroil them with the Northern Courts, and would have been contrary to all the principles on which they had hitherto maintained the contest with France.

[2] St Donat. 105.

They therefore declined the perilous offer. The same party then applied to Napoleon; but he replied, in an evasive manner, that his honour was pledged to the Emperor of Russia and the Prince-Royal of Denmark. The Swedish malecontents, therefore, were compelled to trust to their own resources for the maintenance of their independence; and there can be no doubt that, in the course which they adopted, they acted the part of good patriots, when the great dangers with which they were surrounded, and the imminent hazard of the independence of their country being irrevocably destroyed, are taken into account. The army on the Norwegian frontier was the first to prepare itself. Early in March Colonel Adlesparre set out himself from that force, at the head of three thousand men, and marched upon Stockholm, while the remainder of the troops took possession of Gottenburg, and the principal harbours in the southern provinces of the kingdom. No sooner was Gustavus informed of these events, which were accompanied by a violent popular fermentation at Stockholm, than he quitted his country palace at Haga, where he happened to be at the time, and hastened to the capital, where he shut himself up in his palace, all the avenues of which were strongly occupied by his guards. The king, however, soon found, that even these faithful defenders could not be relied on; the night was passed in great agitation, and in giving the most contradictory orders; but the great object of the unhappy monarch, upon finding himself deserted by all his subjects, was to get the command of relays of horses, and to raise some money for his immediate necessities upon the credit of the English subsidies.

March 7.

March 13.

CHAP. LXV. 1809.

But he soon found it impossible to attain either of these objects. At the same time, the committee of insurrection in Stockholm, which embraced all the principal men in the capital, particularly the Baron d'Adlercrantz, who justly enjoyed a large share of public confidence, and General Klingspor, recently so distinguished by his defence of the province of Bothnia, deemed it of essential importance not to permit the monarch to quit the capital. And the keepers of the public treasury prevented the king from getting any money, by refusing to discharge any orders which had not the authority of the States of the kingdom.[1]

March 12. [1] St Donat. Mem. de Charles Jean, i. 105, 108. Bign. viii. 161, 162. Hard. x. 282, 284.

Arrest of the king, and his resignation of the crown.

In this extremity, as Gustavus still persevered in his resolution to quit the capital, and as the Duke of Sudermania could not prevail upon him to abandon his design, the Baron Adlercrantz, and General Klingspor, whose connexion with the insurgents was not known, were called in to assist in the deliberations. The former began an energetic remonstrance against the king's proposed departure, in the middle of which he was interrupted by Gustavus, who exclaimed, "Treason! Treason! You shall all be punished as you deserve."—"We are not traitors," replied the Baron calmly, "but good Swedes, intent only on the happiness of your majesty and of the country." At these words, the king drew his sword and threw himself on the baron, but the latter avoided the plunge and seized the monarch by the middle, while Colonel Silfesparre got possession of his sword. "Rescue, rescue!" cried the king. "I am assassinated." Upon hearing his cries, the guards outside attempted to enter, and finding the door of the apartment locked, they were proceeding to break it open;

upon which the undaunted Adlercrantz himself unlocked it, and seizing the sabre of a hussar who stood near, and the baton, the ensign of command of the adjutant-general of the guards, threw himself before the troops, who had their swords drawn, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "I am now your adjutant-general, and in that quality I command you guards to retire." The king himself also, from a feeling of humanity, to prevent the useless effusion of blood, made a motion with his hand for them to withdraw. Overawed by his manner, and conceiving the monarch deposed, the guards retired; but in the confusion the king had made his escape by a back-door, which communicated with a postern stair, and seized in his flight the sword of Count Stromfeld. Thus armed anew, he was running across the inner court of the palace towards a guard-house, where he would immediately have found troops ready to support him, when he was met by a forester of the name of Grieff, who threw himself in his way, and though wounded in the arm, continued to hold the king until some of the conspirators arrived, by whom he was immediately disarmed a second time, and reconducted into the state apartments. The Duke of Sudermania was immediately proclaimed regent; next day, the king was conducted as a prisoner to the Castle of Drottingholm, from whence he was transferred to the palace of Grippsholm, from which a fortnight after there appeared his formal renunciation of the crown, grounded on the alleged impossibility of continuing the government in a manner consistent with the interests of the kingdom. So completely were the public in Stockholm prepared for this event, that no disturbances whatever took place there on the change of dynasty;[1] and even the theatres of Stockholm were

CHAP. LXV.

1809.

[1] St Donat. i. 109, 113, Bign. viii. 161, 163.

CHAP. LXV.

1809. open on the night on which it took place, as if nothing unusual had happened.*

Elevation of the Duke of Sudermania to the throne, and peace with Russia. May 3.

This violent but bloodless revolution was immediately followed by the elevation of Adlercrantz, Klingspor, and Aldesparre to the highest offices in the Swedish ministry, and on the 5th of June the Duke of Sudermania was proclaimed King. The States of the kingdom had previously solemnly deposed not only the dethroned monarch, but his whole race,† and nothing remained but to declare his successor, who ascended the throne by the title of Charles the Thirteenth. The first care of the new monarch was to conclude a peace with Russia; and in order the better to attain that object, he wrote to Napoleon, stating "that he placed the integrity of the Swedish throne under the safeguard of the generosity of Napoleon."[1] The French Emperor, however, who was

[1] Letter of July 20, 1809.

* Suspicions had always been entertained of the legitimacy of Gustavus the Fourth; and a story is told by some historians, that in an interview between the queen mother and the deposed monarch, she revealed to him the secret of his birth, and that, to conceal her shame, the king was prevailed upon voluntarily to abdicate the throne. No evidence, however, is adduced to give countenance to this rumour, which rests upon a very suspicious authority, considering the interests which his successors on the throne have, to throw doubts on the legitimacy of the deposed monarch.—ST DONAT. i. 3, and BIGNON, viii. 163. Note.

† "We abjure, by this present act, all the fidelity and obedience which we owe to our King, Gustavus the Fourth, hitherto King of Sweden, and we declare both him and his heirs, born, or to be born, now and for ever, dethroned from the throne and government of Sweden." This is the most open and undisguised dethronement of a monarch by the states of a kingdom which is perhaps recorded in history; and it is not a little remarkable, that it not only was accomplished without the death of the reigning monarch, but without the spilling of a single drop of blood on the part of his subjects. The Swedish historians may well take pride in the dignity, unanimity, and humanity of this great national movement, which offers so marked and pleasing a contrast to the dreadful convulsions which, both in England and France, followed the dethronement of the reigning monarch, and the hideous royal murders by which they were both consummated.—*See* BIGNON, viii. 164, *and* MONTGAILLARD, vi. 397, 398.

at that instant engaged in a doubtful war with Austria on the shores of the Danube, had no inclination to embroil himself with the court of St Petersburg on account of the integrity of Sweden; and in addition to that, he was expressly bound, by the conferences at Tilsit, to surrender Finland to Russia in consideration of himself being permitted to seize upon the kingdom of the Spanish peninsula. Napoleon, therefore, turned a deaf ear to the petition of the Swedish monarch, and the cabinet of St Petersburg, determined to seize upon their prey, notified to the court of Stockholm that they were immediately to resume hostilities. The Swedes were in no condition to make any resistance; for, independently of the paralysis of their national strength which had arisen from the change of dynasty, and the universal desire for immediate peace to which it had been owing, the Russians had gained an extraordinary advantage in the spring of that year, by the bold march of a general destined to the highest celebrity in future times, Count Barclay de Tolly, who, taking advantage of the severe frost of spring 1809, March 7. had the hardihood to cross the Gulf of Bothnia on the ice, and had arrived in the middle of March on the Swedish side as far as Golby, on the road to Stockholm. This extraordinary event, which alone was wanting to complete the marvels of the French revolutionary war, put a decisive period, as well it might, to the contest in the Scandinavian peninsula. The cabinet of St Petersburg were inexorable; the entire cession of Finland was resolved on; and on these terms peace was at length concluded on the 17th of September. Sept. 17. By this treaty Russia acquired Finland, the Isles of 1809. Aland, Savollax, Quirille, and some lesser ones in the Baltic, and the whole province of West Bothnia, as

CHAP. LXV. 1809.

far as Tornea, at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, and from thence, by the course of the river Jocki, almost to the mouth of the frozen ocean. Sweden also declared its accession to the continental system; and in return for so many concessions, the duchy of Pomerania was restored to the Swedish crown, and Prince Holstein Augustenburg, son of the Duke of Holstein Augustenburg, was declared the Crown Prince, or, in other words, the successor to the throne. This treaty was shortly afterwards followed by the conclusion of a treaty between Sweden and France, the only remarkable feature of which was the extraordinary rigour with which the continental system was imposed upon the Swedish monarchy.[1]

[1] See the treatises in Martin's Sup. i. 19, 232. Hard. x. 288, 290. Bign. viii. 168, ix. 201.

Death of the Crown Prince of Sweden.

The flames of war appeared now to be finally stilled on the shores of the Baltic, and Sweden, adhering to the policy of endeavouring to procure a counterpoise in France against the exorbitant power of Russia, had made secret propositions to Napoleon for an alliance between the Prince Augustenburg, the heir-apparent to the throne, and a princess of the Imperial family of France. This proposition, however, was coldly received by Napoleon, who had no inclination to precipitate the contest which he saw would sooner or later arise with the Russian empire. But all these projects were rendered abortive by the sudden death of the young prince, who was seized with a stroke of apoplexy on horseback when reviewing a regiment of guards at Quidinge in Holstein, and died immediately after. This unexpected event, as it deprived Sweden of a successor to the throne, immediately opened up a vast field of intrigue in the north of Europe; and various efforts were made to procure the election of different persons

May 13, 1810.

to the dignity, which should secure the ultimate ascent to the Swedish throne. The right of election was vested in the states of Sweden; but it was easy to see that they would be swayed by external influence in their choice, and the two powers between whom the contest necessarily lay, were France and Russia.[1] St Donat. i. 119. Bign. ix. 207. Hard. xi. 123.

Intrigues for the election of his successor.

Part which France and Russia took in them.

It was obviously the interest of Russia to place on the throne of Sweden a prince who might incline to its protection in any political crisis that might arise, and the secret wishes of that power lay towards the young prince, son of the late king; but there was an obvious difficulty in obtaining the consent of the Swedish Parliament to a measure, the effect of which might be to involve almost all the leading men in the kingdom, at some future period, in the penalties of high treason. The principal object of Napoleon was to secure, in the successor to the Swedish throne, some counterpoise to the power of Russia; for, amidst all the professions of mutual regard by the two emperors, their interests had already begun to clash, and symptoms of estrangement already appeared in their diplomatic intercourse with each other. Candidates, however, were not wanting for the situation. The King of Denmark openly aspired to the honour, and endeavoured to impress upon Napoleon the great political advantage which would arise to France from the union of the three crowns of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, on one head, as a counterpoise to the power of Russia; but the King of Sweden, well aware that such a project would be viewed with extreme repugnance by the nobles and people of Sweden, who were actuated by a jealousy of very old standing towards their Danish and Norwegian neighbours, inclined towards the young prince of Holstein Augustenburg, younger

CHAP. LXV.

1810.

brother of the prince who had just perished, and in a secret correspondence with Napoleon, he disclosed his wishes to the Emperor, who professed himself favourable to the design, and gave the most flattering assurances of his support; and, in particular, the advantages it would bring to both countries to have the royal families of Sweden and Denmark united by closer ties. But the King of Denmark, who was brother-in-law to the Prince of Augustenburg, prohibited him from acceding to the wishes of the King of Sweden, and openly set forth his own pretensions to the dignity, in a letter to the latter monarch.[1]

[1] Letter, Prince Holstein to Charles XIII. July 17; and King of Denmark to King of Sweden. July 18, 1810.. Bign. ix. 210, 213.

Election of Bernadotte.

Matters were still in a state of uncertainty at Stockholm, when an article in the *Journal des Debats*, which at that period was entirely under the direction of the Cabinet of the Tuileries, openly avowed that the election of the King of Denmark to the Swedish throne would be agreeable to the French Emperor. No sooner was this paper received in Sweden, than it produced the greatest consternation. The leading men in that kingdom at once saw that they were about to be sacrificed to the balance of power in Northern Europe, and that, under the pretence of the necessity of providing a counterpart in that quarter to the exorbitant power of Russia, by uniting the three Baltic crowns on one head, they were in effect to be subjected to the rule of their old and inveterate enemies. Colonel Surenaim, a Frenchman by birth, but long aide-de-camp to the present King of Sweden, let fall the expression in the midst of the general disquietude, "The lowest French general would be better received here than the King of Denmark." Many examples had recently occurred of the elevation of French generals to European thrones, and the Swedes were too clear-

sighted not to perceive that possibly, by the election of such an officer, they might, without hazard to their own independence, secure the powerful support of France against the encroachments of Russia. A powerful party in Sweden, accordingly, turned their eyes to Bernadotte, who commanded the large French army on the shores of the Baltic, and who, as already mentioned, had gained the affections of a great number of the best families in Sweden, from his kindness to a body of Swedish prisoners, taken in the Polish war of 1807.* A committee of twelve was, according to the form of the Swedish law, appointed to recommend a successor to the Diet; and at first, eleven votes declared for the young Prince of Augustenburg, and only one for Bernadotte. Before the final day of election a French agent arrived at Oerebro, where the Diet sat, and announced, though as it afterwards appeared without any authority, that the wishes of Napoleon were in favour of the election of his victorious general. This intelligence Sept. 17. immediately altered the determination of the committee. At the public election, a few days afterwards, ten of the twelve voted for Bernadotte, and their choice was immediately afterwards confirmed by the Swedish Diet. He was shortly afterwards adopted as son by Charles XIII.; and, as soon as Napoleon received the intelligence, although he expressed his surprise at it, and wrote to his ambassador at St Petersburg that he would have preferred to see the King of Denmark on the throne, yet he nevertheless advised Bernadotte to accept the dignity of the Crown Prince, and advanced him a million of francs for the expenses immediately consequent upon it.[1]†

[1] Napoleon to the King of Sweden, Sept. 6, 1810. Bign. ix. 222, 228. Monte, viii. 28, 31.

* *Ante*, i. 382.

† Although Napoleon immediately disavowed the agent at Oerebro who had used his name in this transaction, and although the Minister of

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

His history.

Charles John, Prince of Pontecorvo, Marshal Bernadotte, and now King of Sweden, was born at Pau, in Bearn, in the south of France, on the 6th of January 1764. He was the son of a lawyer, and first embraced the profession of arms by entering as a private in the regiment of royal marines.* In that capacity he served in India during the American war, and was present at the taking of Pondicherry. Upon returning to Europe, when peace was concluded between France and England in 1783, he at first thought of quitting the service, and embracing the profession of the law in his native town; but he was prevented by the favour of his colonel, who fixed the destinies of the young soldier, by promoting the future marshal of France and king of Sweden to the rank of sergeant. At the breaking out of the Revolution in 1692, he enjoyed the satisfaction, at Marseilles, of rescuing from a ferocious mob the colonel who had promoted him, and saving his life at the hazard of his own. When the war broke out in 1792,

Foreign Affairs wrote to the French Ambassador at Stockholm, that "he could not bring himself to believe that that individual would have had the impudence to declare himself invested with any diplomatic mission, or authorized to make the least insinuation relative to the election;" yet it is more than probable that that agent was in fact authorized by the French Emperor, who adopted that method of securing the elevation of one of his generals to the throne of a monarchy bordering on Russia, without openly committing himself in his cause. It is extremely improbable that any unauthorized individual would have ventured to interfere in such a transaction, and still more unlikely that the French Minister at Oerebro would have been the dupe of an impostor. The extreme anxiety which Napoleon evinced for some time afterwards to convince the cabinet of St Petersburg that he had taken no concern in this election, only renders it the more probable that he was in reality at the bottom of the transaction.—*See* HARD. xi. 127, 128, BIGNON, ix. 226, 228.

* When he put on his uniform in this regiment at Pau, he exchanged in a frolic his dress with that of a companion, who at the same moment had entered the regiment. The latter, in giving him his uniform, said, "Go, I make you a Marshal of France."—ST DONAT. i. 122.

he distinguished himself in several combats in Flanders, and had attained to the rank of a general of brigade, at the battle of Fleurus, in 1794. He continued to distinguish himself in the war on the frontier of the Rhine, particularly at the passage of the Rhine at Niderworth, in the year 1796. In 1797 he repeatedly signalized himself in the war with Austria, especially at the passage of the Piave, and in the siege of the fortress of Gradiska. In June 1798, he was appointed ambassador at Vienna, and soon after married the daughter of a merchant at Marseilles, of the name of Clary. In 1799 he refused the command of the army in Italy, and took the command of that on the upper Rhine, where he soon reduced Manheim, and, in the end of June in that year, he was appointed minister of war at Paris. To the zeal and ability which he displayed in restoring the shattered ranks of the republican armies, Napoleon was mainly indebted, as already observed, for his astonishing success at Marengo.* But he was dismissed from the office of minister of war by Napoleon, to whom his sturdy republican opinions had proved highly obnoxious, on the occasion of the 18th of Brumaire. Napoleon, however, who was aware of his abilities, afterwards appointed him to the head of the army which invaded Hanover in 1803; in 1804 he was made a marshal of the empire; in 1805 the corps which he commanded had a great share in the successes of Ulm, whither Bernadotte had led it from Hanover; in 1806 he was distinguished in the campaign of Jena, and effected the destruction of Blucher's corps at Lubeck, and, after the peace of Tilsit, received from Napoleon the military command of the Hans Towns. He was immediately afterwards en-

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

Ante, iv. 292.

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

trusted by Napoléon with the formation of a Saxon corps at Dresden, which afterwards took part in the battle of Wagram, and the address to whom, from their commander, as already shown, excited in a peculiar manner the indignation of the French Emperor.* After this he fell into a sort of disgrace, and it was without the knowledge of Napoleon that he was sent by the minister of war from Paris to arrest the progress of the English on the banks of the Scheldt, after the taking of Flushing. Napoleon, after he learned the election of his old lieutenant to the rank of Crown Prince of Sweden, had an interview with him, at which, though warmly solicited, he refused to absolve him from his oath of allegiance to France. Bernadotte, however, was firm; and, after some altercation, Napoleon yielded, and dismissed him with these words: "Well—be it so: set off. Let our destinies be accomplished."[1]

[1] St Donat. i. 121, 159. Hard. xi. 127. Monte, vii. 31.

His character.

It need hardly be said, that he must have been a most remarkable man who thus raised himself from the rank of a private soldier to that of Marshal of France and King of Sweden; and still more, who, after the fall of Napoleon and the general overthrow of the Revolutionary authorities in Europe, could succeed in maintaining his place upon the throne, amidst the fall of all the other potentates who had owed their elevation to his triumphs. In truth, Bernadotte was unquestionably one of the ablest men of the age, fruitful as it was in the greatest ability and the most heroic characters. He was gifted by nature, not merely with the most intrepid courage, but with an uncommon degree of calmness in danger, which early attracted the notice of his comrades, and was the principal cause of his rapid elevation in the

* *Ante*, vii. 507.

revolutionary armies. Difficulties never found him unprepared: dangers always undaunted. He belonged in early life to the extreme Republican party, and was so closely allied with many of the worst characters in the Revolution, that he narrowly escaped destruction on occasion of the Revolution in 1799, which elevated Napoleon to the throne. But, fortunately for Bernadotte, his duties in the army kept him, in general, far removed from the atrocities of the Revolution; and his democratic principles, how strong soever, were not so deeply rooted but what they readily gave place to the suggestions of individual elevation. He was ambitious, and, like most of the other marshals, little scrupulous in the means which he adopted to increase his fortune; but though rapacious when accident or success gave him the means of plunder, he had nothing cruel or vindictive in his disposition; and he was mainly indebted, from the kindness which he showed to the Polish prisoners in the war of 1807, for his elevation to the throne of Charles XII. After his destiny was fixed, he attached himself, in good earnest, to the interest of Sweden: the unbearable arrogance of Napoleon combined with the influence of the monarchy to which he had been elected, to make him espouse the cause of Russia in the great struggle which ensued in 1812 between France and that power; and although afterwards, when the fortunes of Napoleon appeared on the wane, he evinced a natural repugnance to push his old general to extremities, and was only held to his engagements by the strenuous efforts of the British envoy at his headquarters, Lord Londonderry, yet equity must perhaps rather approve than condemn a feeling which, when the interests of his adopted country were secured,

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

led him to incline to that of his birth. He is gifted with remarkable talents for conversation, and shares in all the disposition to vanity and gasconade which belongs to the province of his birth; but he is endowed with great penetration and solidity of judgment; his wise administration has gone far to reconcile the Norwegians to the hated government of Sweden; and although a powerful party in the latter kingdom secretly indulge the hope of the restoration of the legitimate successor to the throne, he has done as much to transmit the crown to his posterity, as can possibly be the case with a dynasty resting on a violent, even though a necessary revolution.

Continued encroachments by Napoleon in Central and Northern Europe.

While these important events were occurring in the north of Europe, and determining in their ultimate effects the fate of the Scandinavian peninsula, Napoleon was pursuing, with now undisguised avidity, his career of pacific aggrandizement in the central parts of Europe. It has been already mentioned that Louis Buonaparte, unable to endure the indignities to which he was subjected by the tyrannical disposition of his imperial brother, had, in July 1810, resigned the throne of Holland, which was immediately incorporated by Napoleon with the French empire; and that the first seeds of a serious outbreak between him and the Emperor Alexander arose from the irritation produced in the breast of the latter by the preference given by Napoleon to the Archduchess Maria-Louisa over the Grand Duchess Paulowna,* with whom also he was in treaty for marriage. These aggressions and causes of irritation were soon afterwards followed by others of a still more serious complexion. On the 12th of November the republic of the Valais, commanding the important passage of the

July 7, 1810.

Nov. 12.

* *Ante*, vii. 788, 805.

Simplon into Italy, was incorporated with the French empire, upon the ground that it was a necessary consequence of the immense works which the Emperor had for ten years carried on in that part of the Alps.* CHAP. LXV. 1810.

The same *senatus consultum* announced to the world other strides in the north of Germany of a still more serious and alarming character. The preamble to this part of the decree was:—"The British Orders in Council, and the Berlin and the Milan Decrees for 1806 and 1807, have torn to shreds the public law of Europe. A new order of things reigns throughout the world. New guarantees having become necessary, I have considered the union of the mouths of the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Rhine, of the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe, to the French empire, and the establishment of an interior line of communication with the Baltic sea, have appeared to me to be the most important. I have accordingly caused a plan to be prepared, which will be completed in five years, that will unite the Baltic with the Seine. Indemnity shall be given to the princes who may be injured by this great measure, which necessity commands, and which makes the right of my empire rest on the Baltic sea." This immense measure of spoliation, which extended the limits of the French empire almost to the frontiers of Russia, involved alike the possessions of the

Annexation of the Hanse Towns and the Duchy of Oldenburg to the French empire. Dec. 13. 1810.

* The preamble of the *senatus consultum* bore—"The union of the Valais to France is a consequence, long foreseen, of the immense works which I have executed for ten years past in that part of the Alps. When, by my act of mediation, I separated the Valais from the Helvetic Confederacy, I did so from foreseeing that one day or other this union, so useful to France and Italy, could no longer be delayed. It has now become indispensable, from the distracted state of the canton, and the abuse which one part of the people has made of its sovereignty over another."—BIGNON, ix. 335, 336.

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

members of Napoleon's own family, and of the relations of those independent powers which it was most his interest to have conciliated. Five hundred thousand souls were by it swept off from the dominions of the King of Westphalia, Napoleon's own brother, and two hundred thousand from the territory of the grand-duchy of Berg, which he had bestowed upon one of his lieutenants; but what was much more serious, it swallowed up the whole possessions of the Grand-Duke of Oldenburg, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Alexander, and, besides entirely cutting off Prussia from the coast of the German ocean, brought the French empire up to Lubeck, almost within sight of the Russian frontier.[1]

[1] Decree, December 13, 1810, Moniteur. Bign. ix. 354, 359. Hard. xi. 209, 210.

Jealousy of Russia at these encroachments.

This monstrous encroachment of Napoleon, serious as it was from the immense extent of the territory thereby incorporated with the French empire, and which extended its dominion from 84 to 130 departments, and its population to forty-two millions of souls, excited the most violent feelings at St Petersburg, and blew into a flame those feelings of irritation which had existed in the Emperor's breast ever since the slight thrown upon his sister by the marriage of Napoleon. The encroachment, great as it was, was rendered still more alarming from the manner in which it was carried into effect; for here an immense tract in the north of Germany was at once annexed to the French empire, without either the formality of diplomatic sanction, or the right acquired by the power of conquest. The French Emperor took upon himself the right to dispose of free cities and independent potentates in the north of Germany, as an eastern sultaun would of the fortunes of his dependent pashas. But, however great and unprecedented

the stretch might be, it was obvious that Napoleon was prepared to make it good by the sword, and that it would be wrenched from him only by force of arms: for shortly before, he had, without any apparent reverse to justify the measure, issued a decree, ordering the levy of forty-five thousand men for the service of the navy, and one hundred and twenty-five thousand men for the army, taken from the youth who had arrived at the age of nineteen in the years 1810 and 1811.[1]

Sept. 27, 1810. Martin's sup. v. 347. Moniteur, Sept. 27, 1810. Dign. ix. 361, 365. Mont. vii. 39, 40.

But, in addition to this great and well-founded cause of complaint, Russia had other sources of disquietude, which were not so strongly established in sound reason, but arose rather from the apprehensions of injustice that her ill-gotten gains would be wrested from her. The grand-duchy of Warsaw was a continual object of jealousy to the cabinet of St Petersburg; and, although Napoleon, as already mentioned, had done his utmost to remove their uneasiness on this head, and expressed his desire "that the name of Poland should disappear, not only from the political transactions of Europe, but even from the page of history;"* yet he had by no means succeeded in allaying their apprehensions. The Russian ministers saw very little of this disposition in the large augmentation which he had given to this duchy out of the spoils of the Austrian monarchy, after the treaty of Vienna in 1809; and, so anxious did the Emperor Alexander become on this subject, shortly after the conclusion of the Austrian treaty, that he opened a negotiation with Napoleon, with a view to the conclusion of a convention which should for ever allay all the apprehensions which he felt on the sub-

Apprehensions of Russia of the restoration of the kingdom of Poland.

* *Ante*, vii. 573. CHAMPAGNY *to* ALEXANDER, 20*th Oct.* 1809.

CHAP. LXV.

1810. Jan. 4, 110.

ject. A convention, accordingly, was drawn up, which Champagny expressly authorized Caulaincourt, the French ambassador at St Petersburg, to sign, which was done accordingly, early in 1810, by which it was expressly stipulated "that the kingdom of Poland shall *never be re-established.* The high contracting parties mutually agree, that the name of Poland and Poles shall never in future be applied to any of the districts, or inhabitants, who formerly composed the kingdom of Poland, and that that name shall *be effaced for ever from every public and official act:* the Polish orders of chivalry shall be abolished; and the grand-duchy of Warsaw shall never be extended over any further portion of what formerly constituted the ancient kingdom of Poland." The Emperor of Russia testified the most extreme satisfaction at the conclusion of this convention, and professed his delight at again feeling himself at liberty to give free vent to his admiration of so great a man as Napoleon, and his anxious hope that his "family might occupy the French throne for ever."[1]

[1] Bign. ix. 101, 103.

Had this convention, as signed by his ambassador, been ratified by Napoleon, his destiny might possibly have been different, and his family, according to Alexander's wish, still on the throne of France. But the convention arrived in Paris at a critical time; when Napoleon, as already mentioned, had taken umbrage at the impediments thrown in the way of the proposals he had made for the Grand-Duchess Paulowna, and when he was already in secret treaty for the Austrian Archduchess.* He declined, therefore, to ratify the convention; proposing, in lieu of the first article of it, regarding the kingdom of Poland never being re-established, to insert one "binding himself to

* *Ante*, vii, 789.

give no encouragement to any attempt tending to its re-establishment." The Emperor of Russia, piqued at this declinature, the more so as it occurred at the very time of the slight thrown on his sister, insisted warmly with Caulaincourt for a simple adhesion to the original convention, as it stood signed by the ambassador of France; but he never could achieve this object; and, in a private conversation with Caulaincourt, he said:—"If affairs change, it is not my fault: I will not be the first to trouble the peace of Europe: I will attack no one; but, if they come to seek me, I will defend myself."[1]

May 11, 1810. [1] Bign. ix. 99, 111. Duke de Vicenza to Caulaincourt. March 11. 1810.

Napoleon, however, never could be brought to agree to a convention stipulating that the kingdom of Poland should not be restored, and he answered the Russian ministers in very warm terms, when pressed on the subject. The cabinet of St Petersburg, therefore, became apprehensive that an attack on their Polish possessions was meditated by Napoleon. So serious had their fears become, that a great augmentation of their force in Poland had already taken place, extensive intrenchments had been erected at Drissa on the Dwina, capable of containing a vast army; and a new levy had been ordered throughout the vast dominions of the Czar. These defensive measures in their turn excited the jealousy of Napoleon, who with reason saw no sufficient explanation of them in the pretext alleged of the losses of the Turkish war; and he directed his ambassador at the Court of St Petersburg to demand explanations on the subject.* Alexander, on being pressed to

Progress of the angry negotiations on the subject.

* "It is in vain to dissemble, that these field-works of such extent indicate bad dispositions on the part of the Russian Cabinet. After having concluded peace with the Porte, as they have soon the prospect of doing, are they about to come to an understanding with the English and violate the treaty of Tilsit? Such a measure would at once place

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

give his reasons for these field-works, retorted by referring to the continued march of French troops, and a large park of artillery, into the north of Germany; observed that he took no umbrage at similar defensive works at Modlin, Thorn, Warsaw, and Torgau; that the demands now made by Napoleon for a rigorous execution of the Continental System were unauthorised by any agreement; and that the only favour which he had yet asked of him not contained in the treaties, viz. a convention concerning Poland, had been refused.[1]

[1] Caulaincourt to Napoleon, December 7, 1810. Bign. ix. 368, 369.

Russian commercial ukase in the end of 1810.

Alexander was no sooner informed of the spoliation of the Grand-Duke of Oldenburg by Napoleon, and the extension of the French empire to the shores of the Baltic, than he replied in a manner which affected Napoleon in the most sensitive point. On the 31st December, 1810, he published an imperial ukase, which, under the colour of regulating the affairs of commerce, in effect contained a material relaxation of the rigour of the decrees hitherto in force in the Russian empire against English commerce. Colonial produce was admitted, if under a neutral flag; a thin disguise, which the commercial enterprize of England was soon able to throw over the most extensive mercantile speculations. Many articles of French manufacture were virtually prohibited, by not being included in the list of goods which might be admitted on payment of a duty, particularly laces, bronzes, jewellery, silks, ribbons, and gauzes. These regulations were attended by an order for the establishment of a coast-guard of eighty

Dec. 31, 1810.

them in a state of hostility with France. I do not desire war; but I will be always ready to undertake it: and such is the nature of things that, to continue at peace, the continent must make war on England as long as England makes war on France."—NAPOLEON *to* DUKE DE CADORE (Champagny), *5th Dec.* 1810—BIGNON, ix. 368.

thousand men to enforce obedience to them; a step which it might be easily seen was but a cloak for the augmentation of the regular army. In addition to this the Cabinet of St Petersburg presented a diplomatic note to all the Courts in Europe, formally complaining of the annexation of the duchy of Oldenburg to the French empire.[1]

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

[1] Martin's sup. i. 348. Bign. ix. 370, 371.

The imperious disposition of Napoleon strongly appeared in the course of the year 1810, in the transactions with his brother, the new king of Westphalia. He had by a solemn deed, made over to that monarch all the rights which he possessed by conquest over the Electorate of Hanover; under the burden, according to his usual practice, of a large portion of the revenues of the electorate, which he reserved to himself, as a fund from which to reward his favourite generals or officers, and those of the King of Westphalia, being at the sole expense of supporting the French troops who might ever be stationed in his territory. The payment of these French troops, however, did not proceed with great regularity; and Napoleon made this a pretext for declaring to his brother Jerome, "that he found himself, with regret, under the necessity of resuming the administration of Hanover, that he regarded the treaty as annulled by the king of Westphalia himself: and that he felt himself at entire liberty to dispose of the Hanoverian territory as his interests might dictate." In effect, it was shortly after incorporated with France, under the name of the 32d military division, on occasion of the union of the Hanse Towns to the "Grande Nation."[2]

Napoleon resumes the kingdom of Hanover from Jerome. July 14, 1810.

Oct. 25, 1810.

[2] Bign. ix. 236, 238.

The clouds, however, which, from so many concurrent causes, were seen to be threatening the French empire in the north of Europe, were in the estimation of the Emperor more than compensated, by the

Birth of the King of Rome, March 20.

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

fortunate event which occurred at Paris in March. The Empress Maria Louisa, who had long promised an heir to the throne, on the 20th was seized with the pains of childbirth; but though she had the aid of the most skilful medical assistance which France could afford, she suffered long and dreadfully before the delivery took place. The calm resolution of Napoleon was signally evinced on this occasion, so interesting to his feelings, and vital to the stability of his throne. The sufferings of the Empress were so protracted and severe, that the medical attendants declared to him, that either she or the infant must perish before the delivery could be effected, and they insinuated a question which should be sacrificed. Napoleon, without hesitating an instant, replied, "Act as you would towards the wife of a burgher in the Rue St Denis: if possible, save both; but, at all events, preserve the Empress." This bold but feeling advice was attended with a happier result than was anticipated: the infant was saved, and proved a son; and at six in the morning, the cannon of the Invalides announced to the capital that the much wished-for event had taken place, and that the KING of ROME was born. It had been previously intimated, that if the infant were a princess, twenty-one guns only would be fired; but if a prince, a hundred. At the first report, all Paris wakened, and the discharges were counted with intense interest, till, when the twenty-first gun had gone off, the anxiety of all classes had risen to an unbearable pitch. The gunners delayed an instant before the next piece was discharged, and some hundred thousand persons held their breath: but when the twenty-second, double-charged, was let off, the whole inhabitants of all ages and sexes sprung on their feet, and universal joy tes-

Resolution of Napoleon on this occasion.

tified the profound hold which the Emperor had acquired of the affections of the people. Innumerable addresses were presented by the public bodies from all parts of France, in which the whole flowers of European rhetoric and Eastern adulation were exhausted, to express the universal enthusiasm at this auspicious event.[1] Thib. viii. 341, 342. Mont. vii. 45, 49. Las Cases.

The secession, now hardly disguised, of Russia from the severity of the Continental System, had the effect only of rendering Napoleon more urgent in exacting the most exact and rigorous execution of his decrees from the other powers in the north of Europe. From Denmark he met with the most willing compliance, and a disposition even to anticipate his wishes in the war against the hated commerce of England; for the cabinet of Copenhagen shut her ports absolutely to all neutral vessels whatever, bearing colonial produce: a measure which effectually excluded the possibility of subterfuge. Against Prussia he fulminated the most menacing complaints for her alleged connivance at a contraband traffic; and with such effect, that the cabinet of Berlin was compelled to sign a treaty on 28th January 1811, by which it was stipulated that the Prussian confiscations of British goods should be accounted for to France, but be taken as a deduction from the amount of the Prussian debt still unpaid from the war contributions. Towards the court of Sweden he assumed a still more threatening tone. He loudly complained that, under pretence of a traffic in salt, a contraband trade was still carried on in the Swedish ports in British colonial produce; and declared that he would greatly prefer open war with himself to such a state of covert communication with his enemies. "I begin to see," said he, "that I have committed a fault in consent- Tyrannical conduct of Napoleon towards Bernadotte.

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

ing to the restoration of Pomerania to Finland. Let the Swedes know that my troops shall instantly re-enter that province if the treaty is not carried into execution to the very letter." [1] Nor was his language softened by the arrival of the new Crown Prince Bernadotte at Stockholm, and the consequent direction by him of the principal affairs of government. On the contrary, he only expected and exacted a more complete submission to his will from his former lieutenant than from an independent power. "Choose," said he, "between cannon-shot against the English vessels which approach your coasts and the confiscation of their merchandise, or an immediate war with France. Sweden is now doing me more mischief than the whole five coalitions put together. You tell me Sweden is suffering? Bah! Is not France suffering? Are not Bordeaux, Holland, Germany, suffering? We must all suffer to conquer a maritime peace. Sweden is the sole cause of the crisis I now experience; it must be ended: at all hazards we must conquer a maritime peace." [2]

[1] Napoleon to Charles XIII. May 23, 1810.

[2] Napoleon to Charles XIII. Oct. 26, 1810. Bign. ix. 337, 341. Hard. xi. 129, 130

Universal misery produced by the Continental System.

Napoleon had good reason for saying that France and her dependencies were suffering at this terrible crisis. Such was the exhaustion and stoppage of industry in the principal towns of the empire, that the paupers amounted in many places to a third, in some to two-thirds of the whole population.* In Russia, the system of paper credit was entirely ruined by the effects of the Continental System; and government paper had fallen so low, that the ruble in go-

* At Rome in 1810 out of 147,000 souls were paupers 30,000
— Amsterdam of 217,000 „ 80,000
— Venice, 100,000 „ 70,000
—HARDENBERG, xi. 253.

vernment paper in the loan negotiated with Pichler, on 27th March 1810, was estimated at just one-half of the silver ruble; and, taking this depreciation into view, the interest stipulated by the lenders in reality amounted to twenty-eight per cent.[1] But bad as this was, the financial and individual ruin in Prussia was incomparably greater: industry was every where at a stand from the want of external commerce, and the absorption of all domestic funds in the French requisitions; the exchequer was penniless, and the national credit extinct; a strong feeling of necessity and patriotic duty alone induced the few remaining capitalists to come forward to enable the king to meet the rigorous demands of Napoleon's tax-gatherers. The augmentation of the troops in her territory in the course of 1810 and 1811, all of whom were fed, clothed, paid, and lodged, at the expense of the bleeding state, was such as to exceed belief, if it were not attested by contemporary and authentic documents.* It may readily be conceived that it was not without extreme difficulty that such prodigious sums could, by the united efforts of the French and Prussian authorities, be extracted from the people; but here, too, the enormous power and irresistible forces of France had provided the means of extortion: the great fortress of Magdeburg had been converted into a prison for the defaulters in the state contributions from all the surrounding provinces;

[1] Hard. xi. 108.

* In a secret report by Chancellor Hardenberg to Baron Krusemark, by order of the King, on 30th August 1811, it appeared that "the Saxon army was cantoned within two days' march of the king's palace; Dantzic alone contains an army, in lieu of the 10,000 men stipulated by the treaties; France has augmented the troops on the Oder to 23,000 men, and their support alone cost the state 250,000 francs a month. The garrison of Stettin has been augmented to 17,500 men."—*Report* BARON HARDENBERG, *30th August* 1811; HARDENBERG, xi. 251.

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

and into that huge bastile Davoust, at the head of an army of seventy thousand men, incessantly poured new shoals of victims. Yet in spite of all their efforts, the demands of France could not be satisfied;[1] and the books of Daru, the inspector-general of accounts, exhibited a continual and hopeless array of arrears undischarged, and debt accumulating.

[1] Hard xi. 239, 249, 251. Schoell, x. 99, 100.

Treaties between France and Prussia.

It may readily be conceived that in these circumstances, Prussia would willingly have thrown off her fetters, if she could have done so with the slightest prospect of success. But such was the prostration and exhaustion of the country, and the universal terror excited by the arms of Napoleon, that the boldest heads and warmest hearts in that country, could see no other mode of prolonging the national existence, and averting the immediate stroke of fate, but in a close alliance with, and unqualified submission to the dictates of Napoleon. Under the influence of these feelings, and overawed by the violent seizure of Swedish Pomerania, which Marshal Davoust entered in February 1812, and immediately overran, at the head of twenty thousand men, on the one side, and the dread of the resumption of Silesia by its old owner Austria, now in close alliance with France, on the other, the cabinet of Berlin not only acceded to, but invited, the conclusion of a treaty

Feb. 24, 1812.

offensive and defensive with France, whereby it was stipulated that there should be an alliance offensive and defensive between the two monarchs: that they should mutually guarantee the integrity of each other's territories; and that the Continental System should be enforced with the utmost rigour in all the Prussian harbours. It was stipulated, however, in secret articles, that the contingent of Prussia,

which was fixed at twenty thousand men, and sixty guns, besides twenty thousand men in garrison, "should not be exigible on account of any wars in which the Emperor might engage beyond the Pyrenees, in Italy, *or Turkey*." In addition to this, the most minute stipulations were inserted, in separate conventions, concerning the march of troops through the Prussian territories, the supplies which were to be furnished to them, and the co-operation of Prussia in the projected war with Russia. The effects of this treaty appeared in the entrance of a hundred and eighty thousand infantry, and seventy thousand cavalry, which immediately spread like a deluge through the Prussian territory, occupied all its fortresses, and devoured, as a cloud of locusts, the whole remaining resources of the country; while the Prussian contingent of twenty thousand men was, in a manner, drowned in the prodigious multitude by which it was surrounded. Shortly after, the French general, Durutte, was appointed governor of Berlin; and a royal edict prohibited the introduction of colonial produce, on any pretence, from the Russian into the Prussian territory.[1]

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

[1] See treaty in Martin's sup. i. 414, and secret articles, in Hard. xi. 325, 326, and Schoell. x. 116, 120.

This treaty was immediately followed by another between France and Austria, which not only relieved Napoleon of all anxiety regarding the latter power, but put a considerable part of her resources at his command. Austria, since the peace of Vienna, had been treated in a very different manner from the dominions of Frederick William, or the lesser German states; her territory was respected, her fortresses garrisoned by her own troops, and the arrears of contributions collected and remitted by her own authorities. The same difference appeared in the treaty which was concluded between the Cabinet of

And with Austria.

March 14, 1812.

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

Vienna and that of the Tuileries. Austria was to furnish an auxiliary force of thirty thousand men, and sixty pieces of cannon: the integrity of the dominions of the Sublime Porte was guaranteed against Russia; the two powers mutually guaranteed each other's dominions, and concluded an alliance offensive and defensive. By another secret treaty which was attended with most important effects in the sequel, it was provided that the *casus fœderis* should not apply to the war beyond the Pyrenees, but expressly to one with Russia; that the province of Gallicia should be guaranteed to Austria, even in the event of the kingdom of Poland being restored; that part of Gallicia specified in the treaty might in that event be exchanged for the Illyrian provinces; and that due compensation, in the shape of an adequate aggrandisement of territory, should be provided for Austria in the event of a prosperous issue of the war. Turkey was to be invited to accede to the confederacy; and Prince Schwartzenberg, still ambassador at Paris, was appointed to the command of the army.[1]

[1] See treaty in Martin, sup. i. 427, and in Schoell. x. 123, 124.

Perfidious policy of Napoleon in these treaties.

Nothing can paint Napoleon's astute policy better than these treaties. While in the secret treaty with Prussia he expressly provides for the case of a French war with *Turkey*, which he clearly contemplated, and which was declared not to be within the *casus fœderis*,—by the secret treaty with Austria, at the very same time, he disarmed the fears of the latter power on the Ottoman question, by expressly guaranteeing the integrity of the Ottoman dominions, and inviting that power to accede to the general league against Russia. And while in his negotiations with Russia relative to the much-desired convention regarding Poland, he again and again ex-

pressed his readiness to sign an engagement "not to favour any design tending to the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland," he at the same time, in the secret treaty with Austria, provided for that very restoration, and stipulated the indemnity which she was to receive in Illyrian provinces for any Polish cessions she might be required to make for its completion.

War forced on Sweden against England.

While Napoleon was thus fortifying himself by the accession of Austria and Prussia, for the great and decisive struggle which was approaching, England and Russia, on their part, were not idle; and an ally was gained for the cause of European independance in a quarter where it could least have been anticipated, but whose co-operation proved, in the end, of the most decisive importance in the subsequent contest. Sweden, further removed from the scene of danger, and more deeply interested than either Prussia or Austria in the preservation of foreign commerce from the sterility of its territory, was not so immediately under the control of Napoleon; and both Charles XIII. and Bernadotte justly apprehended the overthrow of their infant dynasty, if they acceded, in all its rigour, to the imperious demands of the French Emperor for war with England, and the exclusion of British manufactures from the Swedish harbours. M. Alquier, the French ambassador at Stockholm, never ceased to urge, in the most menacing manner, in the latter months of 1810, the necessity of an immediate choice of either a war with France, which would be followed by the conquest of Pomerania, or the immediate commencement of hostilities with England. To these demands, Bernadotte answered, that a war with England would almost entirely destroy the Swedish

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

revenue; that the estates of the kingdom would not submit to any direct imposition; that the arsenals, in consequence of the disastrous issue of the late war with Russia, were empty; that salt, an article of primary necessity to Sweden, could only be obtained from England; that the fleet at Carlscrona could not possibly be got to sea without a great expenditure; and that, so far from having the funds requisite for that purpose, the Government had not even wherewithal to put the fortifications of that harbour in a state of defence against the English fleet. Napoleon remained perfectly deaf to all these representations; and as he left them no alternative, war was declared by Sweden against England in the middle of November 1810.[1]*

Bernadotte to Napoleon, Nov. 19, and Dec. 8, 1810. Schoell. x. 94, 96. Hard. xi. 128, 134.

Alienation of Sweden in consequence of the overbearing demands of Napoleon.

The Swedish Government, however, soon found that their condition was by no means ameliorated by their declaring war against England, so far as France was concerned; and they had ample opportunity of contrasting the manner in which they were treated by the English, against whom they had declared, and France, for whose alliance they had

* Napoleon's reply to these representations was in his usual laconic and imperious style. "You tell me that you wish to remain at peace with France, but I say, let me have proofs of this disposition. Foreign commerce is the present *cheval de bataille* of all nations. I can instantly cause you to be attacked by the Danes and Russians, and I will instantly do so if in fifteen days you are not at war with England. I have been long enough the dupe of Sweden as well as of Prussia; but the latter power has at last learned by the catastrophe of Holland, that it was necessary to take a decided line. I cannot reckon always on the alliance of Russia. I loved the King of Holland, but nevertheless I confiscated his dominions, because he would not obey my will. I did the same with the Swiss. They hesitated on confiscating the English goods. I marched my troops into their dominions, and they soon obeyed. On the fifth day from this, war must be declared, or my ambassador has orders to demand his passports. Open war, or a sincere alliance. These are my last words."—NAPOLEON *to* BERNADOTTE, *11th Nov.* 1810. HARDENBERG, xi. 130.

made such ruinous sacrifices. Feigning to be ignorant of the Swedish declaration of war, the British cruisers committed no hostilities on the Swedish merchantmen; but, on the other hand, the French captured without mercy the Swedish vessels, under pretence that they were trading with England and were not furnished with French licenses, confiscated the cargoes, and threw the seamen into prison. Meanwhile, Napoleon demanded two thousand sailors from Sweden; and, as they were not immediately furnished, he insisted upon them sending twelve thousand. Bernadotte answered, that Sweden had iron in its harbours to the value of a million sterling; and that, if Napoleon would take that instead of the seamen, it would be some relief to Swedish industry; but the Emperor declined this, alleging that he had plenty of iron without going to Sweden for it. He next insisted that French custom-house officers should be established at Gottenburg, and that Sweden should accede to a northern confederacy like that of the Rhine, of which he himself was to be the head, and which was to consist of Sweden, Denmark, and the grand duchy of Warsaw; but the Swedish monarch, aware of the change which had taken place in the close of 1810 in the policy of the Russian cabinet, and feeling his dependence upon Russia and England, both for his resources and his existence, declined the proposal. The consequence was, that, early in January 1812, Napoleon entered Pomerania, overran the whole country, seized the fortress of Stralsund, confiscated all the Swedish ships in the harbour, imposed enormous contributions on the inhabitants, and armed all the merchant vessels in the harbours as privateers against the English commerce;[1] while the French civil authorities, who every where, like vultures, followed in the rear of

CHAP. LXV. 1810.

Dec. 26, 1810.

Dec. 31.

June 9, 1811.

Jan. 27, 1812.

[1] Schoell, ix 95, 101. Hard. xi. 131, 135.

CHAP. LXV. 1812.

their armies, established themselves in the whole country, and began to levy contributions for the use of the Imperial treasury.

The Swedish government allies itself with Russia and Great Britain.

This last act of hostility, following on so long a train of injuries, determined the policy of the Swedish cabinet. Bernadotte lent a willing ear to the suggestions of Russia; and, on the 5th and 8th of April 1812, treaties were concluded between the courts of St Petersburg and Stockholm, by which the

April 5, 1812.

two contracting parties mutually guaranteed each other's possessions: and it was stipulated on the one hand, that, in the event of a war with France, Sweden was to assist Russia with a corps of thirty thousand men, who were to operate, in conjunction with twenty thousand Russians, in the north of Germany; and that, in return, the Emperor of Russia was to guarantee Norway to Sweden, upon the latter power receiving an adequate indemnity in Pomerania; and, in the event of Denmark refusing to agree to this exchange, Russia was to aid Sweden with thirty-five thousand men to conquer Norway. These treaties were shortly afterwards secretly communicated to the British Government, from whom they met with the most favourable reception. Lord Wellesley, and subsequently Lord Castlereagh, who succeeded him in the direction of foreign affairs, exerted themselves to the utmost to promote these amicable dispositions; and, in consequence, a treaty of peace was concluded between Great Britain and Sweden, at

July 12, 1812.

Oerebro, on the 12th of July 1812;[1] the British harbours were immediately opened to the Swedish vessels, and amicable relations immediately re-established between the two countries.*

[1] Schoell, x. 101, 107.

* When Napoleon discovered that Sweden was inclining to the Russian alliance, he made the most vigorous efforts to endeavour to regain the former power to his own interest. For this purpose he offered to evacuate

Previous to engaging in hostilities, Napoleon's preparations were of so extensive a kind, as indicated his sense of the magnitude of the contest in which he was about to engage. By a decree of the senate, of the 13th of March 1812, the whole male population of France capable of bearing arms was divided into three bans; a hundred cohorts of the first of which, estimated at 900,000 men, was to be immediately organized and put into active service, to guard the coast and frontier fortresses; and the two other, disciplined and equipped, without leaving their respective departments, but ready to take the field when called on for the service of their country. By these means, it was calculated, that a reserve of 1,200,000 men could be raised to assist the French army.[1]

Napoleon's vast military preparations. March 13.

[1] Moniteur, March 13, 1812. Bign. x. 172. Thib. viii. 372, 374.

According to his usual custom, when about to commence the most serious hostilities, Napoleon made proposals of peace to England. The terms now offered were, that the integrity of Spain should be guaranteed; that France should renounce all extension of her empire on the side of the Pyrennees; that the reigning dynasty in Spain should be declared independent, and the country governed by the national constitution of the Cortes; that the independence and security of Portugal should be guaranteed, and the house of Braganza reign in that kingdom; that the kingdom of Naples should remain in the hands of its present ruler, and that of Sicily with its

Napoleon's proposals of peace to the English Government. April 17.

Pomerania, on condition that Sweden should aid him with thirty-five thousand men in his attack upon Russia; and if they did so, he offered to restore to them Finland, and admit them into a participation of the benefits of the Confederation of the Rhine. But it was too late. Sweden had taken her part, and formed a sound judgment as to the real interests of her subjects; and the proposals, therefore, were rejected, even though supported by all the influence of the Austrian Minister at the court of Stockholm.—SCHOELL, x. 100, 101.

CHAP. LXV.

1812.

existing king; and that Spain, Portugal, and Italy, should be evacuated by the French and British troops, both by land and sea. To these proposals, Lord Castlereagh replied, that if by the term "reigning dynasty," the French Government meant the royal authority of Spain and its government, as now vested in Joseph Buonaparte and the Cortes assembled under his authority, and not the government of Ferdinand VII., the true monarch of Spain, and the Cortes assembled by his authority, no negotiation could be admitted on such a basis. No reply was made by Napoleon to this answer; and it is evident that the proposal was made with no real prospect of an accommodation, but merely to sow suspicion between the courts of London and St Petersburg, or to give him the advantage which he always desired, of being able to hold out to Europe at the commencement of a new war, that he had in vain made proposals of accommodation to his enemies.[1]

April 23.

[1] Schoell x. 128, 129. Parl. Deb. xxii. 1074, 1075.

When hostilities had been thus long and openly anticipated between France and Russia, it is of little moment to inquire what were the immediate and ostensible grounds which led to the rupture between the two cabinets. Down to the very commencement of hostilities, notes continued to be interchanged between Champagny and Romanzoff, which did little more than recapitulate the mutual grounds of complaint of the two cabinets against each other.[1] Napoleon continually reproached Russia with the imperfect execution of the continental system, the Imperial ukase of the 31st December 1810, the armaments in the interior of Russia, and the fortifications on the Dwina; the transference of powerful forces from the Danube to the Niemen; and the protest of Alexander against the incorporation of the Duchy of Oldenburg

Final negotiation between France and Russia.

[1] Maret.

with the French empire. On the other hand, the ministers of Russia represented that these measures, though apparently hostile, were defensive merely, rendered necessary by the immense accumulation of French troops in Poland and the north of Germany, the invasion of Swedish Pomerania, the extension of the French empire over the whole Hanse Towns and to the Baltic Sea, and the incorporation of the Duchy of Oldenburg with Napoleon's empire. Nevertheless, Alexander offered to come to an accommodation, and dismiss his armaments, on condition that France would evacuate Prussia and Swedish Pomerania, reduce the garrison of Dantzic, and come to an arrangement with the King of Sweden. This ultimatum remained without any answer on the part of the French government, and it was soon sufficiently evident that the decision of both sovereigns had been finally come to; for on the 29th April Alexander arrived at Wilna, and in the middle of May Napoleon set out for Dresden.[1]

April 24, 1812.

[1] Maret to Romanzoff, April 25, 1812. Kourakin to Maret, April 24, 1812. Schoell. x. 130, 135. Hard. xi. 371, 375.

All Europe was held in anxious suspense by the evident approach of the dreadful conflict which had so long been preparing between these two colossal empires, which were thus about to bring the whole forces of Christendom into the contest. Influenced, however, by the calamitous issue of all former wars against Napoleon, but slender hopes were entertained of any successful result of this last resistance now attempted in the north. The power of Napoleon appeared too great to be withstood by any human efforts; and even the strongest heads could anticipate no other issue from the war than the final prostration of Russia, the conquest of Turkey, and the establishment of French supremacy from the English Channel to the Black Sea. The English still fol-

Views with which the contest was regarded in Europe.

CHAP. LXV. 1808.

lowed with intense interest the energetic career of Wellington in the Peninsula; but his fate too, it was evident, was wrapped up in the issue of the approaching contest; and even the most sanguine could hardly hope for any thing but disaster to the British arms if Napoleon, victorious over Russia and Turkey, were to bring back his conquering legions from the Vistula and the Danube to the banks of the Ebro. A general despair in consequence seized the minds of men; it seemed doubtful if even the British navy in the end could secure the independence of this favoured isle: and the general subjugation of the whole civilized world was anticipated—probably to be rescued from slavery only by a fresh deluge of northern barbarians.

CHAPTER LXVI.

ADVANCE OF NAPOLEON TO MOSCOW.

ARGUMENT.

Napoleon's Secret Reasons for the War with Russia—Vast Force which he had collected for that Enterprise—Universal Enthusiasm with which the Expedition was regarded in the French Empire—Different Feelings of the Troops of different Nations—Disinclination of the Marshals and older Officers for the Campaign—Views of the Russian Government on the approaching Contest—Religion and Patriotism the Principles to which they appealed—Plan of the Russian Government to resist the Invasion—Desponding Feelings of the English—Military Preparations of the French Emperor for the Contest—Force of the French Army—Force of the Russians—Forces which they had collected on the Frontier to oppose the Invasion—Division of Napoleon's Forces at the outset of the Campaign—General Aspect of the Polish Provinces adjoining Russia—Napoleon leaves Paris; Splendour of his Residence at Dresden—His confident Anticipations of Success in the Campaign—Distress in Poland on the first Entrance of the French Army—Prodigious Efforts of the Emperor for the Supply of his Troops—And to elevate their Spirit—Approach of the French Army to the Niemen—Napoleon's Proclamation to his Soldiers on crossing the River—Splendid Scene on the Crossing of the River—Proclamation of the Emperor Alexander to the Russians on the invasion—Noble Resolution of the Russian Army and People—Their Forces retreat on all sides—Napoleon enters Wilna, and remains there seventeen days—Enthusiasm of the Poles on that Event—Address of the Polish Diet to the Emperor—His Views on the Subject, and Reply—Movements of Jerome Bonaparte against Bagrathion—Their ill Success, and consequent Displeasure of Napoleon—Combat of Mohilow—Bagrathion effects his Retreat to Smolensko—Retreat of the Russian main Army to the intrenched Camp at Drissa, and thence to Polotsk—Napoleon advances to the Dwina—Rendezvous of the principal Part of his Forces in Front of Witepsk—Position of the Russians, and Force which Barclay had collected there—Intelligence from Bagrathion induces him to retreat to Smolensko—Admirable order in which the Retreat was conducted—Advance of the French to Witepsk, and Reasons for their halt there—Immense Difficulty experienced in providing Subsistence for the Invading Army—Causes to which it was owing—The Emperor Alexander repairs to Moscow, to hasten the Armaments in the Interior—Proclamation to the Nation—Generous and Patriotic Devotion of the Inhabitants of Moscow—Departure of the Emperor for St Petersburg—Opinion of Napoleon on these Proclamations—First Operations of Count Wittgenstein on the Dwina—Oudinot, reproached by Napoleon, again moves against him—Operations of Tormasoff against Schwartzenberg—Information received at Witepsk of the Conclusion of Peace be-

CHAP. LXVI.

1812.

CHAP. LXVI.

1812.

tween the Russians and Turks, and an Alliance between Sweden and England—Argument against any further Advance at the French headquarters, and Answer of Napoleon—Reflections on this Determination—Barclay advances against the Right of the French Army—Napoleon advances against Smolensko—Heroic Action of Newerofskoi, near Krasnoi—Both Armies approach Smolensko—Description of that City—First Attack of Ney on the Citadel, which is repulsed—Napoleon's Dispositions for a general Attack on the town—Noble Appearance of the Attacking Army—The Russian Army retires in the night, leaving a strong Rearguard only in the City—Bloody Attack on the town, which proves unsuccessful—Repulse of Napoleon, and Results of the Battle—Splendid Appearance of the burning City at Night—Retreat of the Russians from Smolensko—Circular March of Barclay to regain the Moscow Road and Bagrathion's Corps—Battle of Valentina—Measures of Napoleon to restore the Combat—Desperate Valour displayed on both Sides—Results of this Bloody Action—Singular Good Fortune of the Russians on this Occasion—Napoleon's Visit to the Field of Battle—General Uneasiness and Depression of the French Army—Enormous Losses already sustained from Sickness and Fatigue—Napoleon's reasons for a farther Advance—Reasons which induced the Russian Generals to prepare for a Battle—Operations of Schwartzenberg against Tormasoff—And of St Cyr against Wittgenstein, and of Macdonald against Riga—Advance of Victor to Smolensko—And of Augereau from the Oder, and the National Guard of France to the Elbe—Advance of Napoleon towards Moscow—Appointment of Kutusoff to the Supreme Command—His Character and previous Achievements—Arrival of Kutusoff at the Headquarters of the Army—Extraordinary Skill and Order of the Russian Retreat—Order of the French Pursuit—Description of the Country through which the French Army passed in advancing to Moscow—The Russians take post at Borodino; Description of their Position there—Napoleon's Arrival on the Field of Battle—Attack on the Redoubt in front—Napoleon receives the Account of the Battle of Salamanca—Night previous to the Battle—Napoleon's Proclamation to his Soldiers—Efforts of the Russians to animate the Spirits of their Troops—Forces engaged on both Sides—Davoust's Plan of Attack, which is rejected by the Emperor, who resolves to attack, by *echellon*, from the Right—Russian Dispositions for the Battle—French Preparations for the Attack—Proclamation of Kutusoff to his Troops—Feelings of the Soldiers on both Sides—BATTLE OF BORODINO—Commencement of the Action—Success of Ney and Eugene in the Centre—Ney and Davoust, after an obstinate Conflict, carry the Heights of Semonowskoie—The great Redoubt is taken and retaken—Alarm on the left by an Irruption of Russian Cavalry—Grand successful Attack on the Great Redoubt—Its Capture leads to no decisive Result—Fresh Advance of the Russian Centre—Final Operations of the day—Magnitude and Importance of this Battle—Loss on both sides—Want of Vigour evinced by Napoleon in this Battle—Sound Reason, nevertheless, which prevented him from engaging his Reserves—Reflections on the Battle—Distressed Condition of the French Army at its termination—Orderly Retreat of the Russians towards Moscow—Debate in the Russian Council of War whether they should Evacuate Moscow—Reasons given in the Council of War, by Kutusoff, for abandoning Moscow—Total Deficiency of Supplies, if known to the Russians, would have forced the French to Halt and Retreat—Universal Desertion of the City by the Inhabitants—Arrival of the French at Moscow—

Description of that City—Transports of the French Troops at the sight—The French enter, and find the City deserted—Preparations made by the Russians for burning it—First night of the French in Moscow—Commencement of the Conflagration—Awful Appearance of the Fire during the following night—Disorder and Consternation in the City—Napoleon at length leaves the Kremlin—Horrors of Moscow after the Fire had ceased—Semicircular March of the Russian Army round the City—Feelings of the Soldiers in the Russian Army on this occasion.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

THEY are little acquainted, says Marshal St Cyr, with the progress of ambition, who are surprised that Napoleon undertook the war in Russia. It is the nature of that desire, as of all other vehement passions, to be insatiable. Every gratification it receives only renders it the more vehement, until at length it outsteps the bounds of physical nature, and quenches itself in the flame it has raised. Napoleon knew well that his empire was founded on the *prestige* of popular opinion; that to maintain that opinion it was necessary that he should continually advance; that the moment his victories ceased his throne began to totter. The public, habituated to victory by his successes, were no longer to be dazzled by ordinary achievements: he felt that his later triumphs must eclipse those of his earlier years; that if he only equalled them, he would be thought to have retrograded; that victories might have sufficed for the General of the Republic, but conquest must attend the steps of the Emperor of the West. To overthrow Austria, or conquer Italy, might suffice for his earlier years; but nothing could revive the enthusiasm of the people in later times, but the destruction of the Colossus of the North. From the moment that he launched into the career of conquest,[1] he had perilled his fortune on a single throw—universal dominion or a private station.[1] Such is the universal law of nature; the principle which leads to the punishment of national equally as individual sins;

Napoleon's secret reasons for the war with Russia.

[1] St Cyr, Hist. Militaire, iii. 2, 3.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

the curb at once on the pride of aristocracy, the madness of democracy, and the rage of conquest; the fetter which checks the excesses of men, and the limit which restrains the rulers of nations.

Vast force which he had collected for that enterprise.

Since the fall of the Roman empire, no monarch had ever attained the commanding station which Napoleon occupied at the commencement of the Russian war. The influence of Charlemagne extended over a smaller surface, and embraced only barbarous states: the hordes of Timour were hardly as numerous, and incomparably inferior in discipline and equipment. Even the myriads of Attila or Genghis Khan exhibited no such combination of the muniments of war, and foreboded no such permanent subjection of the liberties of mankind. From the shores of the Baltic to the mountains of Calabria, from the sands of Bourdeaux to the forests of the Vistula, the whole forces of Europe were marshalled at his will; the accumulated wealth of ages was turned to the support of one gigantic power; and the military prowess, which centuries of glory had fostered in rival states, combined under the banners of one victorious leader.

The acknowledged supremacy of his genius had extinguished the jealousies even of the armies who had suffered most in his career. The Austrians and Italians, the Prussians and Bavarians, marched in the same ranks with the French and the Poles. The partition of Poland, the humiliation of Prussia, the conquest of Austria, were for a time forgotten: the conquerors of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena, were to be seen side by side with the vanquished in these disastrous combats. However much the sense of present humiliation might oppress the governments, or the recollection of recent wrongs rankle in the

minds of the people he had vanquished, the necessity of present submission was felt by all: one only passion, the desire of conquest, animated the varied bands who followed his standard; one only career, that of military glory, remained to the youth in the realms he had subdued.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 125.

Universal enthusiasm with which the expedition was regarded in the French empire.

During the spring of 1812 the whole roads of France and Germany were thronged by cavalry, infantry, and artillery, hastening to the scene of the approaching conflict. The varied aspect and splendid equipment of these troops, excited the strongest feelings of enthusiasm in the military people through whom they passed. It appeared impossible that any human efforts could resist the immense force which was converging towards the Vistula: the presence of Napoleon ensured victory; immediate advancement and lasting glory awaited those who distinguished themselves in the combats. Such was the general enthusiasm which was excited in every part of the Emperor's vast dominions, that young men of the richest and the noblest families eagerly solicited employment in an expedition where success appeared certain, and danger unlikely. All heads were turned by the torrent; ambition, in every age and rank, was dazzled by the apparent brilliancy of the prospect. The expedition, said they, which is preparing, will throw that of Egypt into the shade. Never had the instinct of war, the passion for military glory, more strongly seconded the ambition of the chief of an empire. "We are setting out for Moscow, but we will soon return," were the words with which the joyous youth every where took leave of their parents, their relations, their friends. The march to Petersburg or Moscow seemed only a military promenade—a hunting party of six months' duration, in which little danger was to be met, but

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

ample excitement experienced—a last effort, which would place the empire of Napoleon, and the glory of France, beyond the reach of danger. The magnificence of the spectacle, and the brilliancy of the prospects, spread these feelings even amongst the people of the vanquished states: the expected restoration of Poland, and humiliation of Russia, gave an air of romance to the approaching expedition: and thousands breathed wishes for its success, who were destined soon to be aroused by nobler emotions, or to perish in a holier cause.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 101, 128, 131. Fain. MS. de 1812, i. 46, 47. De Pradt, Varsovie en 1812, 58.

Different feelings of the troops of different nations.

Notwithstanding, however, the general enthusiasm which animated the warlike multitude, the different nations of whom it was composed, were inspired by very different feelings; and, though the resplendent chains of the empire held them all for the time in willing obedience, yet the elements of discord existed, and it might have been foreseen would break out if any serious disaster befell the head of the confederacy. The Prussians beheld with ill-suppressed grief their banners associated with those of the conqueror and oppressor of their country: the Austrians, after having contended for twenty years with France, blushed at being themselves ranged as auxiliaries under the power with whom they had so long struggled for mastery: even the Germans of the Rhenish confederacy, notwithstanding their longer union with the troops of Napoleon, were filled with discontented feelings, and could not disguise the conviction, that every victory they gained for the imperial despot was riveting more firmly the fetters about their own necks. The Poles alone, cheered by the anticipated restoration of their country, and indignant at the repeated wrongs they had experienced from Russia, advanced with joyful steps to the conflict, and prepared to strike for the cause of national

independence, not the interests or ambition of any external power. Yet, such is the marvellous effect of military subordination, and of the point of military honour, that the enormous assemblage of armed men were animated by one common feeling of warlike enthusiasm, and the commands of Napoleon were as readily obeyed by the Italians, Germans, or Prussians, as the guards of the French Empire.[1]

[1] Chambray, Guerre de Russie, i. 165, 166.

In one important particular, however, the composition of the army was very different from what it had been in the earlier periods of the Republic. Though the young officers and fresh conscripts were animated with the utmost ardour, yet the older generals and marshals, whose fortunes were made, and in whom age was beginning to extinguish the fires of youth, were by no means equally eager for the contest. Having nothing further to look to in military advancement, and not feeling "the necessity of conquest to existence," which, in every period of his career, was so strongly experienced by their chief, they beheld with ill-disguised aversion the mortal conflict in which they were now about to be engaged, and sighed for their palaces, their chateaux, and their pleasures, instead of the hardships and privations of a Russian campaign. Napoleon perceived and lamented this change in his old companions in arms: he felt no such refrigeration in himself, and was astonished that they did not follow him in the close of his career with the same ardour as in its commencement. Unable, however, to overcome their repugnance for bold counsels, he gradually estranged himself from their society, concentrated his burning thoughts in his breast, and not unfrequently withdrew from a council of marshals into an embrasure of a window,[2] where he opened his mind in unreserved communication with some young general of

Disinclination of the marshals and older officers for the campaign.

[2] Fain. i. 46, 47.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

division, whose ideas were more in harmony with the undiminished energy which he felt in his own bosom.

Views of the Russian Government on the approaching contest.

The Russian Government was fully aware of the approaching danger, and had for a considerable period been silently preparing to meet it. Upwards of a year before, a large portion of the Turkish army, as already noticed, had been withdrawn from the Danube, and the main strength of the empire collected on the Niemen.* The Emperor Alexander had, by the address of his aide-de-camp Chernicheff, obtained an apparently accurate, though, as was afterwards experienced, deceptive detail of the strength of the "grand army," its destination, and the several corps of which it was composed. He resolved to oppose to the vast preparations of the French Emperor the indomitable perseverance of northern valour; and, without provoking the contest, to undergo every thing rather than yield in the strife. The nobles, at this crisis, rallied round the throne with a spirit worthy of the Roman senators; and the poor peasants, ignorant of the magnitude of the danger by which they were to be assailed, prepared to die in defence of their country and their religion.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 103, 106. Sav. iii. 140.

Religion and patriotism the principles to which they appealed.

Military spirit prevailed to a considerable degree in the Russian army, but by no means to the extent which subsequently existed after the unparalleled successes of the war. The disastrous issue of all preceding contests with France, and the doubtful event of the war with the Turks, had spread a desponding feeling both through the government and the country. Alexander and his council were prepared indeed to resist; but it was rather with the mournful and magnanimous resolution of perishing in defence

* *Ante*, viii. p. 548.

of their country, than from any confident hope of being able to achieve its deliverance. They had to contend with a monarch of consummate military talents, whose career of victory had been unbroken, with an army inured to conquest by twenty years of success, and who now led on more than half the forces of continental Europe to overwhelm the resistance of its only remaining independent power. In such a conflict they were well aware the chances of victory, the hope of success, lay all on the other side. Worldly motives, usually so powerful in the human breast, could in vain be appealed to; but Alexander found the means of meeting it in those higher and more generous principles, which, unknown in ordinary times, unfelt by ordinary men, yet exist in every heart, if not overwhelmed by the intensity of selfish desires, and not unfrequently defeat all the calculations of the most experienced observers, by the brilliancy with which they shine forth on extraordinary occasions. RELIGION and PATRIOTISM were the principles to which the Russian Government appealed in the awful crisis; and they met with a responsive echo in every heart within their dominions. Every proclamation to the people, every address to the nobles, breathed the language of religious or patriotic devotion. The Emperor, neither confident nor depressed, appeared prepared to combat to the last man in defence of his country, and, if necessary, be the last martyr in its cause. The French, like mankind in general, ridiculed sentiments of which they were ignorant, and stigmatized as fanatical the efforts of the Russian authorities to imprint a religious character upon the contest; little aware that the forces of revolution, in other words the passions of the world, cannot be success-

CHAP. LXVI.

1812.

fully combated but by an appeal to religious emotion, that is, the motives of heaven; and that, when the Emperor Alexander elevated the standard of the cross, he invoked the only power that ever has, or ever will, arrest the march of temporal revolution.[1]

[1] Fain. i. 76, 317. Chamb. i. 176.

Plan of the Russian Government to resist the invasion.

It was not without due consideration, and a full appreciation of the sacrifices with which it would be attended, that the Cabinet of St Petersburg had adopted the resolution of engaging in a war of life or death with the French empire. They had carefully studied the warfare of Wellington in Portugal; and a military memoir of extraordinary ability, still preserved in the archives of St Petersburg, had pointed to that sagacious and scientific campaign as the model on which the defensive system of Russia should be founded.[2] To support the plan of operations, an intrenched camp, capable of containing the whole Russian army, had been constructed at Drissa to cover the approach to St Petersburg. A strong *tête-du-pont* at Borissow covered the passage of the Berezina by the route of Moscow; and the ramparts of Smolensko, the bulwark of Old Russia, were armed with cannon, and put in a respectable state of defence. But none of these strongholds were capable of resisting the vast forces which Napoleon had at his disposal. They were intended as obstacles only to retard the advance of his army, leaving it to other and more powerful agents to accomplish his destruction. For this purpose, the Russian armies, like those of Wellington down the valley of the Tagus, were to retire slowly into the interior of the empire; the country, as they fell back, was to be denuded of its inhabants, and laid waste; clouds of light horse were to harass the flanks and cut off the foraging parties of the advancing enemy; and every effort made to rouse the

[2] Hard. ix. 274.

rural population, and inspire them with a religious zeal in the great contest in which they were about to be engaged. By these means it was hoped the forces of the French Emperor, great as they undoubtedly were, would be gradually wasted away. Every step they advanced in a desolate realm would bring them nearer their ruin; and the very magnitude of his army would ultimately prove an insupportable incumbrance, from the impossibility of providing subsistence for such a multitude. But it was impossible to rouse a national spirit in Lithuania, because its inhabitants, ancient Poles, being seized with the desire of recovering their independence, were animated with the strongest spirit in favour of the invaders; and therefore this system could really be carried into effect only when the army reached Smolensko, the ancient frontier of Russia; and the erroneous information which Chernicheff had obtained at Paris as to the strength of the French army, led the Emperor to miscalculate the force which would be requisite to repel it, and rendered necessary a much farther retreat, and more extensive sacrifices than had at first been relied on.[1]

[1] Chamb. i. 176, 177. Fain. i. 176. Bout. i. 164.

The repeated defeats of the Russians, in the preceding wars with Napoleon, spread a desponding feeling throughout the English people in regard to the approaching contest. Taught by the disastrous consequences of former coalitions, the British Government made no attempt to stake the last chance of Europe on the hazardous issue of continental war; and, contrary to all former precedent, they neither offered, nor would Russia accept, any pecuniary assistance. Mr Perceval stated in the House of Commons, that Russia engaged in the contest on her own responsibility,[2] and without any instigation on the

Desponding feelings of the English.

[2] Parl. Deb. July 13, 1812

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

part of England; and the Czar sought to animate the patriotism of the people by the assurance that they stood alone in the contest, and would share with none the glory of success.

Military preparations of the French emperor for the contest.

The forces which Napoleon at that period commanded, amounted to the enormous number of nearly twelve hundred thousand men, almost all in the highest state of discipline and equipment. Of these eight hundred and fifty thousand were native French, and of that body only three hundred thousand were engaged in the Spanish war. A population of forty-three millions in the French empire, and eight more in the kingdom of Italy and the Illyrian provinces, afforded apparently ample means of recruiting his losses; but as the conscription had ceased to be productive from the arrival of the period when those destroyed in the early revolutionary wars occasioned a chasm in the births of 1794 and 1795, and consequently in the population between eighteen and twenty years of age, he resorted to an extraordinary method of providing for the security of his dominions: All the inhabitants of the French empire, and of the kingdom of Italy capable of bearing arms, were formed into three bans, as they were called—the first comprehending all those from twenty to twenty-six years of age; the second from twenty-six to forty; the third, from forty to sixty years of age. One hundred and twenty thousand of the first ban, was immediately placed at the disposal of the minister-of-war. This extraordinary measure, unknown in any former contest, demonstrates both how fatally the conscription had operated upon the male population of France, and may be regarded as one of the first prognostics that the empire had reached the limits of physical nature, and approached its fall. The weakness of age fell

at once upon it, when the chasms occasioned by the dreadful wars of 1793 and 1794, appeared in the male population which should be available for the purposes of the conscription. The total failure of the conscription, after 1811, demonstrated that the early wars of the Revolution had mowed down the race from which the defenders of the empire should have sprung.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 80, 81, 88, 89. Jom. iv. 52, Sav. v. 273.

Force of the French army.

The grand army itself, which was now concentrated in Poland, or ready to support the movements of those in advance, was divided into thirteen corps of infantry and four of cavalry, and amounted to the immense aggregate of above five hundred thousand men.* Of these, above eighty thousand were cavalry, and they were supported by thirteen hundred pieces of cannon. Nearly twenty thousand chariots or carts, of all descriptions, followed the army; and the horses employed in the artillery, the cavalry, and the conveyance of the baggage, amounted to the unprecedented number of one hundred and eighty-seven thousand. No such stupendous accumulation of armed men had yet been formed in modern times, or probably since the beginning of the world.[1] Of this prodigious armament, however, only two hundred thousand were native French; the remainder were Germans, Italians, Poles, Swiss, and Austrians, whom the terror of the French arms had compelled, how unwillingly soever, to follow their banners. "Exercitus mixtus ex colluvione omnium gentium quibus non lex, non mos, non lingua communis; alius habitus, aliæ vestes, alia arma, alii ritus, alia sacra."[2]

[1] Jom. iv. 52. Chamb. i. 386.

[2] Liv. l. 28, c. 12. Jom. iv. 52. Chamb. i. 386. Oginski, iii. 138.

The forces which the Russian empire had to oppose to this crusade, were much less considerable at the commencement of the campaign, but they were

* See note A, Appendix.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

constantly increased as the war rolled into the interior of the empire; and, before its close, the armies on the two sides were nearly equal. Its regular forces amounted, in the close of 1811, to five hundred and seventeen thousand men; but of these nearly seventy thousand were in garrison, and the remainder dispersed over an immense surface, from the Danube to the Gulf of Finland, and from the Niemen to the Caucasus. Two successive levies had, however, been effected since that period, which furnished most seasonable supplies of disciplined men to the armies, as they were successively thinned by the casualties of war.[1]

Forces of the Russians.

[1] Bout. i. 106.

To oppose the invasion of the French, the Russians had collected two hundred and seventeen thousand in the first line, and thirty-five thousand in the second; and the army of Moldavia, amounting to fifty thousand, ultimately appeared on the scene, and took an active share in the close of the campaign. Their united strength was nearly three hundred thousand, of which above fifty thousand were cavalry, and they brought into the field upwards of eight hundred pieces of cannon.* The forces of the French, therefore, exceeded those of the Russians by nearly three hundred thousand men; but the former were at an immense distance from their resources, and had no means of recruiting their losses, whereas the latter were in their own country, and supported by the devotion of a patriotic and devoted people. By the foresight of the Government, thirty-six depots, in the provinces bordering on the supposed theatre of war, had been formed, to supply the losses occasioned by the campaign, and proved of the most essential service in the progress of the war.[2]

Forces which they had collected on the frontier to oppose the invasion.

[2] Bout. i. 112, 152, 154.

* See note B, Appendix.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Napoleon's forces, at the commencement of the campaign, were divided into three great masses. The first, two hundred and twenty thousand strong, under the immediate orders of the Emperor, was destined to overwhelm the first Russian army, under the command of Barclay de Tolly, who had only one hundred and twenty-seven thousand; the second, consisting of seventy-five thousand, under Jerome, was to crush Prince Bagrathion, whose forces were only forty-eight thousand; the Viceroy, at the head of seventy-five thousand, was charged with the important task of throwing himself between these two Russian armies, and preventing their reunion. Besides these great armies, the right wing of the French, thirty thousand strong, under Schwartzenberg, was opposed to Tormasoff, who had forty thousand under his orders; and the left, of the same strength, under Macdonald, was destined to act against Riga, where Essen, with an inconsiderable force, awaited his approach.[1]

Division of Napoleon's forces at the outset of the campaign.

[1] Bout. i. 152, 157. Jom. iv. 51, 53. Segur, i. 139.

The face of the country on the western frontier of Russia is in general flat, and in many places marshy. Vast woods of pine cover the plains, and the rivers flow in some places through steep banks, in others stagnate over extensive swamps, which often present the most serious obstacles to military operations. Cultivation in Lithuania is so inconsiderable, that the fields of corn seem cut out of gloomy forests; the villages are few and miserable; the little industry which exists is owing to the Jews, who reside in the towns in great numbers. Inhabiting a rich country, the Poles are destitute of the common necessaries of life: employed in raising magnificent crops of wheat, they seldom taste any thing but rye-bread, oats, or the coarsest fare. The miserable aspect of the country attracted

General aspect of the Polish provinces adjoining Russia.

CHAP. LXVI.

1812.

[1] Bout. i. 122, 123. Labaume, 20. Burnett's Poland, i. 90.

the notice even of the careless followers of Napoleon's army; but the warlike spirit of the people was undecayed, and the peasants equally with the nobles retained that aptitude for war, and facility at assuming its discipline and duties, which in every age has formed their honourable characteristic.[1]

Napoleon leaves Paris. Splendour of his residence at Dresden.

Napoleon left Paris on the 9th May: the Empress Maria Louisa accompanied him to Dresden. The whole sovereigns of Germany were there assembled, including the Emperor Francis and the King of Prussia. The Empress had left Germany as a sacrifice to the interests of her country: she returned beside the conqueror of the world, surrounded by the pomp of more than imperial splendour. The theatres of Paris had been transferred to Dresden; the assembled courts of Europe there awaited her approach; the oldest potentates yielded to the ascendant of her youthful diadem. During the magnificent series of pageants which followed her arrival, flattery exhausted its talent and luxury its magnificence; and the pride of the Cæsars was forgotten in the glory of one who had risen upon the ruins of their antiquated splendour. No adequate conception can be formed of the astonishing power and grandeur of Napoleon, but by those who witnessed his residence on this occasion at Dresden. The Emperor occupied the principal apartments of the palace; his numerous suite were accommodated around; the august guests of the King of Saxony all looked to him as the centre of attraction. Four kings were frequently to be seen waiting in his antechamber; queens were the maids of honour to Maria Louisa. With more than eastern magnificence he distributed diamonds, snuff-boxes, and crosses among the innumerable crowd of princes, ministers, dukes, and courtiers, who thronged, with oriental

servility, around his steps; whenever he appeared in public, nothing was to be heard but praises of his grandeur and magnificence. The vast crowd of strangers, the superb equipages which thronged the streets, the brilliant guards which were stationed in all the principal parts of the city, the constant arrival and departure of couriers from or towards every part of Europe, all announced the king of kings, who was now elevated to the highest pinnacle of earthly grandeur.[1]

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

[1] Segur, i. 108, Jom. iv. 40, 41. Fain. i. 63, 67. De Pradt, Varsovie, 36, 37. Las. Cas. ii. 361.

No fears for the issue of the gigantic expedition which he had undertaken, ever crossed the mind of the Emperor, or the cortége of kings and princes by whom he was surrounded. "Never," said he, "was the success of an expedition more certain; I see on all sides nothing but probabilities in my favour. Not only do I advance at the head of the immense forces of France, Italy, Germany, the Confederation of the Rhine, and Poland; but the two monarchies which have hitherto been the most powerful auxiliaries of Russia against me, have now ranged themselves on my side: they espouse my quarrel with the zeal of my oldest friends. Why should I not number in a similar class Turkey and Sweden? The former at this moment is, in all probability, resuming its arms against the Russians: Bernadotte hesitates, it is true, but he is a Frenchman; he will regain his old associations at the first cannon-shot; he will not refuse to Sweden so favourable an opportunity of avenging the disasters of Charles XII. Never again can such a favourable combination of circumstances be anticipated: I feel that it draws me on; and, if Alexander persists in refusing my propositions, I will pass the Niemen."[2] Marvellous as is the contrast between these anticipations and the actual issue of the cam-

His confident anticipations of success in the campaign.

[2] Fain. i. 68, 69.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

paign, the penetration of few men in Europe could at that time presage a different result from the French Emperor; and Madame de Staël expressed the almost universal opinion, that "when Napoleon was at Dresden in 1812, surrounded by all the sovereigns of Germany, and commanding an army of five hundred thousand men, it appeared impossible, according to all human calculation, that his expedition should not succeed."[1]

[1] De Staël, Rev. Franç. ii. 401.

Distress in Poland on the first entrance of the French army.

June 17.

No sooner had he arrived in Poland than the Emperor was assailed by the cries of the peasantry, who were ruined by his soldiers. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions on his part to prevent pillage, and to provide for their necessities, the enormous multitude of men and horses who were assembled, speedily exhausted the country. It was in vain that his prudent foresight had provided numerous battalions of light and heavy chariots for the provisioning of the army; innumerable carriages laden with tools of every description, twenty-six squadrons of waggons laden with military equipages, several thousand light caissons, carrying luxuries as well as objects of necessity of every description, and six complete sets of pontoons; the wants of such a prodigious accumulation of troops, speedily exhausted all the means of subsistence which the country afforded, and all the stores they could convey with them. Forced requisitions of horses, chariots, and oxen from the peasantry, soon became necessary; and the Poles, who expected deliverance from their bondage, were stripped of every thing they possessed by their liberators. To such a pitch did the misery subsequently arrive, that the richest families in Warsaw were literally in danger of starving, and the interest of money rose to eighty per cent.[2] Yet such was the

[2] Chamb. i. 164, 170. Segur, i. 114, 115. Fain. i. 82, 83. De Pradt, 85, 91, 93. Gourgaud, i. 103.

rapidity of the marches at the opening of the campaign, that the greater part of these exactions were abandoned or destroyed before the army had advanced many leagues into the Russian territory.

Enormous magazines had been formed to provide for the wants of the troops in the campaign. By the treaty, already mentioned, concluded with Prussia a short time before, that unhappy country was compelled to furnish 220,000 quintals of oats, 24,000 of rice, 2,000,000 bottles of beer, 400,000 quintals of wheat, 600,000 of straw, 350,000 of hay, 6,000,000 boisseaux of oats, 44,000 oxen, 15,000 horses, 3,600 carriages, harnessed and furnished with drivers and horses; and hospitals provided with every requisite for 20,000 patients. At Dantzic, the grand depot of the army, innumerable military stores were collected, and magazines capable of being transported by water through the Frischaff to Konigsberg, and by land across the country to Interberg, where they were received on the Niemen. The active and empassioned mind of the Emperor had long been incessantly occupied with this object; the whole day was passed in dictating letters to his generals on the subject; in the night he frequently rose from bed to reiterate his commands. "For masses such as are now to be put in movement," said he, "the resources of no country can suffice. All the caissons must be ready to be laden with bread, flour, rice, vegetables, and brandy, besides what is requisite for the moveable columns. My manœuvres may assemble in a moment four hundred thousand men at one point: the country will be totally unable to provide for them; every thing must be brought by themselves."[1]

Prodigious efforts of the Emperor for the supply of his troops. Feb. 24, 1812.

[1] Segur, i. 120, 121, 124, and Gourgaud, i. 127. Fain. i. 92. Chamb. i. 164.

Before approaching the Niemen, the Emperor reviewed the principal corps of his army. On these occasions, according to his usual practice, he passed

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

through the ranks of the soldiers, and enquired minutely into their wants and equipments. The veterans he reminded of the battles of the Pyramids, of the glories of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena; the conscripts seemed equally the object of attention: was their pay regularly received, were their rations faithfully served out, had they any complaints to make against their officers? Frequently he halted in the centre of a regiment, and, calling the troops around him, enquired what commissions were vacant, and who were most worthy to hold them; and having ascertained the age, services, and wounds of those specified, immediately appointed them to the vacant situations in the presence of their comrades. By attentions such as these Napoleon gained the hearts of his soldiers, and produced that enthusiastic attachment to his person, which, as much as the splendour of his military talent, distinguished every period of his career.[1]

And to elevate their spirit.

[1] Segur, i. 123.

At length he approached the Niemen, and the numerous battalions of the Grand Army converged towards Kowno, which being the extreme point of a salient angle, where the Prussian projected into the Russian territory, seemed a favourable point for commencing operations. The infantry arrived in good order, and left but few stragglers behind; but the cavalry and artillery had already begun to suffer severely: the grass, the hay, the meadows, were soon entirely consumed by the enormous multitude of horses which passed along, and the succeeding columns suffered severely from the devastation of those which had preceded them. Two hundred and twenty thousand men, and a hundred thousand horses, now concentrated at the point of junction of four different roads at Interberg on the Pregel, presented a mass of combatants unparalleled in modern

Approach of the French army to the Niemen.

June 17.

times for their efficiency and splendour. Before setting out for the Niemen, the troops were all served with provisions to convey them beyond that river to Wilna, the capital of Russian Poland. But all the care of the Emperor and his lieutenants was unable to provide subsistence for such stupendous masses: the carriages and cattle which had been seized in Old Prussia, under a provision that they should be sent back as soon as they reached the Niemen, were still kept for service beyond that river, and the unhappy owners resumed the road to their homes, destitute either of money or provisions, and uttering the loudest complaints against the injustice with which they had been treated. Pillage and disorder were already universal on the flanks of the army; and it was easy to foresee that want of provisions would prove the great difficulty of the campaign. The masses, however, pressed on without intermission; and at length on the 23d June, before daybreak, the Imperial columns approached the river, which as yet was concealed by the great forest of Pilwisky, and the Emperor immediately mounted on horseback to reconnoitre the banks. His horse suddenly fell as he approached the shore, and he was precipitated on the sand. Some one exclaimed, "It is a bad omen—a Roman would have retired;" but, without regarding the augury, he gave orders for the construction of three bridges, and retired to his quarters, humming the tune, "Marlborough s'en va à la guerre," and repeating with martial emphasis the line, "Ne sait quand il reviendra."[1]

June 23.

[1] Segur, i. 143. Fain. i. 92, 93. Jom. iv. 52. Chambray, i. 170, 173.

On the approach of night the following proclamation of the Emperor was read to the troops:—"Soldiers, the second war of Poland is commenced: the first was terminated at Friedland and Tilsit, when

June 23.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Russia swore an eternal alliance with France, and war with England. Now she violates her oaths. She refuses to give any explanation of her strange conduct till the French eagles have repassed the Rhine, leaving our allies at her discretion. *Fate drags her on—let her destinies be fulfilled.* Does she imagine we are degenerated? Are we not still the soldiers of Austerlitz? We are placed between dishonour and war; our choice cannot be doubtful. Let us then advance, cross the Niemen, and carry the war into her own territory. The second Polish war will be as glorious as the first; but the peace we conclude shall be its own guarantee, and put an end to the fatal influence which for fifty years Russia has exercised in the affairs of Europe." The soldiers, grouped in circles, heard these animating words with enthusiasm, and immediately the signal to advance was given: vast columns defiled out of the forest and hollows with which the banks of the river abounded, and pressed in silence to the margin of the stream; not a sound was heard but the measured tread of marching bands, not a light was suffered to shine on the vast and disciplined array of France. The troops halted and lay down on the edge of the river, too impatient to sleep, and eagerly gazing through the gloom at the Russian shore.[1]

Napoleon's proclamation to his soldiers on crossing the river.

[1] Segur, i. 141. Moniteur, July 1, 1812.

At one in the morning the corps of Davoust broke up and crossed the river, and shortly after its advanced guard took possession of Kowno. The tent of the Emperor was placed on an eminence three hundred paces from the bank, and as the sun rose he beheld the resplendent mass slowly descending to the bridges. The world had never seen so magnificent an array as lay before him; horse, foot, and cannon in the finest order, and in the highest state of equipment, inces-

Splendid scene on the crossing of the river.

June 24.

santly issued from the forest, and wound down the paths which led to the river: the glittering of the arms, the splendour of the dress, the loud shouts of the men as they passed the Imperial station, inspired universal enthusiasm, and seemed to afford a certain presage of success. The burning impatience of the young conscripts; the calm assurance of the veteran soldiers; the confident ardour of the younger officers; the dubious presentiments of the older generals, filled every heart with thrilling emotion. No sinister presentiments now were visible on the countenance of the Emperor; the joy which he felt at the re-commencement of war communicated an universal degree of animation. Two hundred thousand men, including forty thousand horse, of whom twelve thousand were cuirassiers, cased in glittering steel, passed the river that day in presence of the Emperor. Could the eye of prophecy have foreseen the thin and shattered remains of this countless host, which a few months afterwards were alone destined to regain the shore of the Niemen, the change would have appeared too dreadful for any human powers of destruction to have accomplished.[1]

Segur, i. 144, 145. Bout. i. 162. Fain. i. 167. Chamb. i. 172.

The passage of troops continued incessantly during the 24th and 25th; and the cavalry under Murat, passing Davoust's corps, took the lead in the advance. The Viceroy and Jerome, at the head of their respective armies, crossed some days afterwards at Pilony and Grodno, the former at the head of seventy, the latter of sixty-five thousand men, and immediately began to advance against the corps of Bagrathion, which lay in the opposite country; whilst Macdonald passed the Niemen at Tilsit, and on the 2d July Schwartzenberg crossed the frontier by passing the Bug at Moguilnica.[2]

[2] Lab. 31, 32. Bout. i. 173. Chamb. i. 173. Fain. i. 168, 172.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

The Emperor Alexander was at a ball at a country house of General Benningsen, in the neighbourhood of Wilna, when the intelligence of the passage of the river reached him. He concealed the despatches, and remained with the company till its close, without exhibiting any change of manner, or revealing in any way the momentous news he had received. On the same night, however, after the festivities were over, he prepared and published the following proclamation to the nation and army:—"For long we have observed the hostile proceedings of the French Emperor towards Russia, but we always entertained the hope of avoiding hostilities by measures of conciliation; but, seeing all our efforts without success, we have been constrained to assemble our armies. Still we hoped to maintain peace, by resting on our frontiers in a defensive attitude, without committing any act of aggression. All these conciliatory measures have failed: the Emperor Napoleon, by a sudden attack on our troops at Kowno, has declared war. Seeing, therefore, that nothing can induce him to remain at peace, nothing remains for us but to invoke the succour of the Most High, and oppose our forces to the enemy. I need not remind the officers and soldiers of their duty, to excite their valour; the blood of the brave Sclavonians flows in their veins. Soldiers, you defend your religion, your country, and your liberty. I am with you: God is against the aggressor." To the nation the commencement of the war was announced in a letter addressed to the Governor of St Petersburg, which concluded with these remarkable words:—"I have the fullest confidence in the zeal of my people, and the bravery of my soldiers. Menaced in their homes, they will defend them with their wonted firmness

Proclamation of the Emperor Alexander to the Russians on the invasion. June 25, 1812.

and intrepidity. Providence will bless our just cause. The defence of our country, of our independence and national honour, have forced me to unsheath the sword. *I will not return it to the scabbard as long as a single enemy remains on the Russian territory.*" [1]

[1] Bout. i. 163, 165. Oginski, iii. 154. Hard. x. 142.

The intelligence of the invasion of the French, and these moving addresses, excited the utmost enthusiasm in the people and the army. It was not mere military ardour, or the passion for conquest, like that which animated the French army; but a deep-rooted resolution of resistance, founded on the feelings of patriotism and the spirit of devotion. Less buoyant at first, it was more powerful at last: founded on the contempt of life, it remained unshaken by disaster, unsubdued by defeat. As the French army advanced, and the dangers of Russia increased, it augmented in strength; and while the ardour of the invaders was quenched by the difficulties of their enterprise, the spirit of the Russians rose with the sacrifices which their situation required.[2]

Noble resolution of the Russian army and people.

[2] Bout. i. 164. Chamb. i. 177, 178.

It was with feelings of regret, therefore, that the Russian army received orders to retire before the enemy. This resolution had been previously taken, and all the commanders furnished with directions as to the route they were to follow. The enormous superiority of Napoleon rendered it hopeless to attempt any resistance, till time and the casualties incident to so long a march, had thinned his formidable ranks; nor was it long before the wisdom of this resolution became apparent. The sultry heat of the weather at the crossing of the Niemen, was succeeded by a tempest the fury of which resembled the devastating hurricanes of tropical climates. Upon the countless

Their forces retreat on all sides.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

multitudes of Napoleon, who traversed an exhausted country, covered with sterile sands or inhospitable forests, its violence fell with unmitigated severity. The horses perished by thousands from the combined effects of incessant rain and unwholesome provender; one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, and five hundred caissons, were left at Wilna without the means of transport; above ten thousand dead horses were found on the highway leading to that city alone; thirty thousand disbanded soldiers spread desolation round the army; and before it had been six days in the Russian territory, or a single shot fired, twenty-five thousand sick and dying men filled the hospitals of Wilna and the villages of Lithuania.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 147. Bout. i. 155. La Baume, 32. Chamb. i. 182, 183.

Napoleon enters Wilna, and remains there seventeen days.

Barclay left Wilna on the 28th June, and on the same day Napoleon entered it. He remained there for seventeen days; a delay which military historians have pronounced the greatest fault in his whole life. It is certain that it gave time to the Russian commanders to retire in admirable order, and exhibits a striking contrast to the rapidity with which he pursued his broken enemy after the battle of Jena, or the combats of Ratisbon and Echmuhl. Already the extraordinary consumption of human life in the campaign had become apparent; for as the Emperor reviewed the troops at Wilna, they were almost struck down by the pestilential smell which the westerly wind blew from the long line of carcasses of horses and bodies of men which lay unburied on the road from Kowno.[2] But on the other hand, it is to be recollected that Lithuania afforded none of the resources for a victorious army which the opulent and cultivated plains of Saxony or Bavaria presented. Vast forests of pine, or deserts, heaths, and sands, offered no resources for the troops.

June 28.

[2] Dumas, Souv. iii. 426.

Contrary to what obtains in the old civilized states of western Europe, the vicinity of the highways was hardly more peopled or better cultivated than the unfrequented districts; and if the army outstripped the convoys which accompanied it, the soldiers would have perished of want, or the military array been dissolved by the necessity of separating for the purpose of marauding and pillage. The unparalleled magnitude of his present forces necessarily impeded the Emperor's movements; and he felt that if he advanced, without due precaution, into so sterile a region, he ran the risk of perishing, like Darius, from the multitude of mouths which he had to feed.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 172. Jom. iv. 72. Chamb. i. 187.

The ancient and unforgotten patriotism of the Poles burst forth without control for some days after the occupation of Wilna. Napoleon entered that city at the head of the Polish regiment commanded by Prince Radzivil, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, who regarded him as their liberator. The national banners were raised amidst the acclamations of multitudes; the young embraced and wept in the public streets; the aged brought forth the ancient Polish dress, which had almost been forgotten during the days of their humiliation. The Diet of Warsaw declared the kingdom of Poland re-established, convoked the national diets, invited all the Poles to unite together, and called upon those in the Russian service to abandon its standards.

Enthusiasm of the Poles on that event.

Napoleon took some steps at first, calculated to favour the hope that a national restoration was in contemplation. The few days devoted at Wilna to the repose of the army, were given by the Emperor to the organization of a provincial government,

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

extending over all Lithuania. The country was divided into four governments; and prefects, mayors, and assistants, elected as in the French Empire. Six regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, were directed to be raised, one of which formed part of Napoleon's guard; and the constant presence of Maret, his minister for foreign affairs, whose anxiety for the restoration of Poland was well known, in all his diplomatic labours, inspired the general hope that some decisive measure for the reversal of the great act of injustice under which it had suffered was in contemplation. Altogether, the Poles furnished to Napoleon, in the course of the campaign, no less than eighty-five thousand men.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 153, 154, 158. Oginski, iv. 5. Fain i. 181, 183.

Address of the Polish Diet to the Emperor.

The first address of the Polish Diet to the Emperor was signally characteristic of the profound feelings of undeserved injury by which that gallant nation were animated.—"Why have we been effaced from the map of Europe? By what right have we been attacked, invaded, dismembered? What have been our crimes, who our judges? Russia is the author of all our woes. Need we refer to that execrable day, when, in the midst of the shouts of a ferocious conqueror, Warsaw heard the last groans of the population of Praga, which perished entire by fire or sword? These are the titles of Russia to Poland; force has forged them, force can alone burst their fetters. Frontiers traced by a spoliating hand can never extinguish our common origin, or destroy our common rights. Yes! we are still Poles! The day of our restoration has arrived: the land of the Jagellons and the Sobieskis is to resume all its glory." The clergy were next admonished to solicit the Divine protection; and an

address published to the Lithuanians in the Russian army, calling upon them to range themselves under the banners of their country.[1] CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

But though Napoleon was not insensible to the advantages which the co-operation of the Lithuanians offered him; yet political considerations of insurmountable weight prevented him from taking that decisive step in favour of the restoration of Poland, by which alone its independence, in the midst of so many powerful neighbours, could be effected; viz. the re-union of all its partitioned provinces under one head. He was well aware of the ardent, but unsteady and factious character of the Poles, and deemed the aid of their tumultuous democracy dearly purchased, if the friendship of Austria or Prussia, his present firm allies, were endangered in its acquisition. He replied, therefore, to the address of the Polish Diet, —"I approve of your efforts, and authorize you to continue them. I will do all in my power to second your resolutions. If you are unanimous, you may indulge the hope of compelling the enemy to recognise your rights; but in these remote and widely extended countries, it is solely in the unanimity of the efforts of the population that you can find hopes of establishing it. Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Volhynia, Podolia, and the Ukraine, be animated by the same spirit which I have witnessed in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and Providence will crown your efforts with success. I must at the same time inform you, that I have guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian dominions, and *can sanction no movement which may endanger the peaceable possession of her Polish provinces.*" These words froze every heart with horror. It was evident that he was willing enough to disturb Russia by a revolt in her Lithu-

[1] Chamb. i. 195. Fain. i. 181.

His views on the subject, and reply.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

anian dominions, but had no inclination to embroil himself with Austria or Prussia, by a general reunion of the Polish provinces; and without that, it was universally felt the restoration of the kingdom would prove an illusory dream. The provincial government which he had established did not possess the confidence of the nation; no guarantee for the restoration of the monarchy was given; distrust and dissatisfaction succeeded to the transports of inconsiderate joy; and Napoleon, by yielding to the dictates of a cautious policy, lost the support of a gallant people.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 153, 158. Oginski, iii. 274. Chamb. i. 195, 196. Fain. i. 183, 185.

Movements of Jerome against Bagrathion.

While Napoleon, with the main body of his army, moved upon Wilna, Jerome and Davoust advanced against Bagrathion, who was forced to fall back by an eccentric line of retreat towards Bobrinsk. The rapidity of the advance of the French centre cut off the communication between the two Russian armies; and by pushing back Barclay five days before the position of Bagrathion was disturbed, he hoped to repeat the oblique attack on a great scale which had proved so fatal to the Austrians at Lissa. Bagrathion, in consequence, fell back: but finding that his advanced posts, in consequence of the oblique advance of the French centre, encountered the corps of Davoust, whom Napoleon had detached from the Grand Army to prevent his rejoining the Russian centre, he was obliged to make several detours; and

July 9.

in the course of one of these, his cavalry, consisting chiefly of Cossacks, encountered at Mir the advanced guard of Jerome's army, composed of three regiments of Polish cavalry. A sharp action ensued, which terminated favourably to the Russians, and the day following a still more serious combat took place, be-

July 10.

tween six Polish regiments and the Cossack cavalry,

which also terminated in the repulse of the invaders. These brilliant affairs, which were the first engagements of the campaign, produced the utmost enthusiasm in the Russian army; but Bagrathion, wisely judging that even a total defeat of Jerome's army, by drawing him farther from the interior, would only enable Davoust to interpose between his army and the retiring columns of Barclay, continued his retreat, and reached in safety the ramparts of Bobrinsk on the Berezina, on the 18th July.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 190, 228. Jomini, iv. 66. Chamb. i. 199, 200. Fain. i. 208, 213, 216.

The object of Napoleon in these movements was to separate entirely Bagrathion from Barclay de Tolly, and enclose the former between Jerome's army, which pressed his rear, and Davoust's corps, which was destined to fall perpendicularly on its flank, or occupy the termination of the roads by which it was retiring, or might seek to regain by cross-roads the intrenched camp of Drissa, where the whole army was ordered to rendezvous. But the rapidity and skill of the Russian movements, joined to the inexplicable tardiness of Jerome's pursuit, having rendered this well-conceived design abortive, the Emperor deprived his brother, with bitter reproaches, of his command, and placed the corps of Junot and Poniatowski under the orders of Davoust.* This change did not improve the success of the movements for the capture of Bagrathion. That general reached

Their ill success, and consequent displeasure of Napoleon.

July 8.

* "I am extremely displeased at the King of Westphalia (Jerome) for not having sent his light troops in pursuit of the enemy under Bagrathion. It is impossible to manœuvre worse than he has done. Had Poniatowski only a single division he should have been sent forward on that duty; whereas, in fact, he had his whole corps. By thus forgetting all rules, as well as his express instructions, Bagrathion has gained time to make his retreat with perfect leisure. The whole fruit of my manœuvres, and the finest opportunity of the war, has been lost by his singular forgetfulness of the first principles of the military art."—FAIN. i. 230.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Minsk on the 8th, and on the 12th resumed his march for Witepsk. Both armies advanced with expedition to occupy Mohilow, which commanded the entrance of the defiles by which the cross movement towards Barclay was to be effected; but in spite of the utmost diligence of the Russians, they found it already in the hands of Davoust, who defended its approaches with thirty thousand men, and had adopted every imaginable precaution to secure it from attack. On the 23d July, Bagrathion pushed forward General Raeffskoi with twenty thousand men to attack the French position, which was extremely strong, in the defiles of a forest which was filled with artillery and tirailleurs. An obstinate conflict ensued, in which the Russians displayed their characteristic intrepidity in sustaining unmoved for hours, at the entrance of the ravine, the most terrible fire of musketry and grape-shot: but being unable to force the French from their strong ground, Bagrathion wisely commenced a retreat, which was conducted in admirable order, and with little molestation. The loss on both sides was nearly equal, consisting of somewhat above three thousand men on the Russian, and three thousand two hundred on the French part.[1]

Combat of Mohilow.

July 23.

[1] Jom. iv. 76, 77. Bout. i. 236, 237. Chamb. i. 273, 279.

Bagrathion effects his retreat to Smolensko.

The junction of Count Platoff having raised Bagrathion's army on the following day to fifty-five thousand men, he might, without difficulty, have forced Davoust from his position, and continued his movement by Mohilow, as Davoust had not more than thirty-four thousand to oppose him. But the favourable position of the French army, which communicated by an interior line with the centre, under Napoleon, rendering that a hazardous operation, he prudently retired to Novo-Bichow, from whence he

crossed the Borysthenes, and leisurely advanced by Mestilau to Smolensko, where he joined the main army under Barclay on the 3d August. Davoust, intimidated by the severity of the combat at Mohilow, did not venture to follow his rival across that deep and marshy river; and thus the whole measures of the French for the separation or capture of Bagrathion's forces, though conducted by two armies, each of which was as numerous as his own, ultimately proved abortive. CHAP. LXVI. 1812. [1] Jom. iv. 76, 77. Bout. i. 238, 239.

Meanwhile, the main Russian army, after leaving Wilna under Barclay, retired to the intrenched camp of Drissa, on the river Dwina. The Emperor on the 8th July, being the anniversary of the battle of Pultawa, published an energetic address to his soldiers, who were somewhat discouraged by their long retreat before the enemy.* This camp, intrenched with the utmost care, and capable of containing a hundred thousand men, had been selected and fortified long before as a favourable position for covering the road to St Petersburg. It was defended by ten redoubts and 354 pieces of cannon. But it became entirely useless and even perilous, when Napoleon, moving the mass of his forces towards his right, threatened not only to

Retreat of the Russian main army to the intrenched camp at Drissa, and thence to Polotsk. July 8.

* "Soldiers! When the enemy dared to cross our frontiers, we were so much scattered, that it was necessary to retire in order to effect the re-union of the troops. Now this is effected. The whole of the first army is here assembled: the field of battle is open to your valour;—so docile to rule, so ardent to maintain the reputation which your valour has acquired, you are about to gain laurels worthy of yourselves and of your ancestors. The remembrance of your valour, the *eclat* of your renown, engage you to surpass yourselves by the glory of your actions. The foes of your country have already experienced the weight of your arms. Go on then, in the spirit of your fathers, and destroy the enemy who has dared to attack your religion and national honour even in your homes, in the midst of your wives and children. God, who is the witness of the justice of our cause, will sanctify your arms by his divine benediction."—CHAMBRAY, i. 215. July 9.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

advance in the direction of Moscow, but to throw the Russian army towards Livonia and the sea, and sever it from its communication with the heart of the empire. To avoid such a catastrophe, and at the same time facilitate the long wished-for junction with Bagrathion, who, since his repulse at Mohilow, had been driven to the circuitous route of Borissow and Liady, with a view to join Barclay at Witepsk or Smolensko, the general-in-chief resolved to evacuate the camp of Drissa, and retire by the right bank of the Dwina to Witepsk. On the 14th July Barclay broke up from his intrenchments, and on the 16th the headquarters were established at Polotsk, where the Emperor quitted the army and hastened to Moscow, to stimulate by his presence the patriotic efforts of that important capital, which was evidently about to become the principal object of the efforts of the enemy.[1]

July 14.

1 Bout. i. 180, 198, 199. Chamb. i. 213, 217. Fain. i. 274, 275.

Napoleon advances to the Dwina.

On the 16th July Napoleon moved from Wilna, and advanced with nearly two hundred thousand men towards the camp of Drissa. Finding it evacuated at his approach, he halted for six days at Gloubokoie; and on the 22d continued his movement towards Witepsk, and reached the Dwina on the 24th at Bechenchowiczi. Barclay, perceiving that he was throwing the mass of his forces on the right towards Witepsk, resolved to anticipate him in his march to that place, in order to preserve his own communication with Smolensko, where he expected to effect his junction with Bagrathion. In consequence, the Russian headquarters were advanced with great rapidity to Witepsk on the 23d, and a large part of the army was crossed over to the left bank of the stream,—a perilous operation, and which exposed the troops to the dangers which had been

July 23.

so severely experienced, when a similar movement was made to the left of the Niemen in presence of the enemy at Friedland. The delay of Napoleon at Gloubokoie, however, preserved the Russian army from a similar disaster. His advanced posts did not reach Ostrowno till the 25th, by which time Barclay had assembled all his forces, eighty thousand strong, in the neighbourhood of Witepsk; and the vanguard, consisting of twelve thousand men, was strongly posted under Ostermann on the wooded heights which adjoin the former town. No movement in the campaign was of more vital importance to the Russians than this advance upon Witepsk: and if Napoleon had not delayed six days, apparently without a cause, at Gloubokoie, he could with ease have anticipated the enemy at that important point; permanently interposed the bulk of his forces between Barclay and Bagrathion; and, throwing back the former towards St Petersburg, and the latter on Smolensko and Moscow, cut off the former from the southern provinces and principal resources of the empire.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 211, 215. Jom. iv. 72, 73. Chamb. i. 221, 223. Fain. i. 273.

With such precision had the orders of Napoleon been obeyed, that the whole corps of the army which he commanded in person reached the rendezvous on the Dwina at the same hour, though their march had begun a hundred leagues in the rear from the banks of the Niemen. The assemblage of one hundred and eighty thousand men at the same point, produced for some time an inextricable confusion; but by degrees the different corps defiled to the separate posts assigned to them; and before midnight silence reigned in the midst of that innumerable army.[2]

Rendezvous of the principal part of his forces in front of Witepsk.

[2] Segur, i. 194, 195. Chamb. i. 227, 228.

On the 25th and 26th, Murat, at the head of ten thousand horse and two thousand light troops, the advanced guard of the French, attacked Count Oster-

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

mann near Ostrowno, and several severe actions ensued, in the course of which he charged in person at the head of the Polish lancers. The Russian infantry, strongly posted in the thick woods with which the country abounded, arrested by a heavy fire the advance of the French cavalry; and many charges were made on both sides with various success, and without any decisive effect. During the delay occasioned by these actions, both parties brought up the main body of their forces; and on the morning of the 27th, the whole Russian army, eighty-two thousand strong, was to be seen posted on an elevated plain which covered the approaches to Witepsk. Their superb cavalry, amounting to above ten thousand soldiers, were stationed in double lines in front of the right of the position; the infantry in the centre, behind the deep bed of the Leizipa; and a magnificent array of artillery occupied the left on a series of wooded eminences. Napoleon, at the head of a hundred and eighty thousand men, made every preparation for an attack on the following day. Several severe skirmishes between the advanced guards, in presence of their respective armies, with alternate success, elevated the hope of the contending parties; and the soldiers on both sides sharpened their weapons, and prepared for a mortal struggle on the following day. Napoleon's last words to Murat at nightfall were, "To-morrow at five, the sun of Austerlitz!"[1]

Position of the Russians, and force which Barclay had collected there. July 26.

[1] Segur, i. 200, 204, 205. Bout. i. 218, 220. Fain. i. 279, 282. Chamb. i. 229, 231.

In truth, the Russian general, notwithstanding the vast disproportion of numbers, had taken the bold resolution to give battle on the following day, in order to avoid the danger of being attacked by the French while defiling by a flank movement in the direction of Orcha, where he had appointed

Bagrathion to meet him. But during the night intelligence was received, which fortunately induced him to change his determination. It appeared, from letters brought by one of his aides-de-camp, that Bagrathion having been arrested by Davoust at Mohilow, and unable, in consequence, to continue his march to Orcha, had crossed the Dnieper, and was moving towards Smolensko. Barclay immediately resolved to discontinue his intended flank movement towards Orcha, and, abandoning Witepsk, to effect his junction in the neighbourhood of that renowned bulwark of the Russian empire.[1]

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Intelligence from Bagrathion induces him to retreat to Smolensko.

[1] Bout. i. 220, 222. Fain. i. 286.

Brilliant watch-fires were kept up in the Russian lines during the night, to induce the belief that they were resolved to give battle; but, meanwhile, the whole army broke up from its encampment, and the important and perilous duty of protecting the rear was intrusted to Count Pahlen. Early on the morning of the 28th, Murat, who had bivouacked with the advanced posts, approached the enemy's station, but found their camp entirely deserted. With such skill had the retreat been conducted, that not a weapon, not a baggage-waggon, not a straggler, had been left behind—

Admirable order in which the retreat was conducted.

July 28.

> "'Twould seem as if their mother earth,
> Had swallow'd up her warlike birth."

Following on the traces of the enemy, the advanced guard was unable, at the separation of the two roads of St Petersburg and Moscow, to ascertain which their opponents had followed! The French officers beheld with astonishment the science and discipline of their enemies, and were obliged to acknowledge with shame, that there was more order in the Russian retreating than in their own advancing columns.[2]

[2] Segur, i. 209. Bout. i. 222. 224. Fain. i. 287. Chamb. i. 237.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Advance of the French to Witepsk, and reasons for their halt there.

The Viceroy at length discovered the Russian rearguard slowly retiring in admirable order over the plain towards Smolensko. Some charges executed against it by the French chasseurs were not only repulsed, but the assailants destroyed. The exhausted state of the horses rendered it impossible for the cavalry to act with effect, and the retreating riders could only save their extenuated horses by leading them by the bridles; the rays of a powerful sun overwhelmed the soldiers, and every thing conspired to indicate the necessity of repose. In truth, the losses of the army during their long march had been such, that it was absolutely necessary to make a halt. Napoleon had accomplished the advance from Kowno and Grodno to Witepsk, without magazines or convoys, in little more than thirty days; whereas Charles XII. had taken eight months to traverse the same space, with the whole stores of the army accompanying its columns. From the want of magazines, and the impossibility of conveying an adequate supply of provisions for so immense a host, disorders of every kind had accumulated in a frightful manner on the flanks and rear of the army; neither bread nor spirits were to be had; the flesh of overdriven animals and bad water constituted the sole subsistence of the soldiers; the burning sun during the day, and cold dews at night, multiplied dysenteries to an extraordinary degree. Pillage was universal; the necessities of the soldiery burst through all the restraints of discipline; and a crowd of stragglers and marauders on all sides, now swelled to above thirty thousand, both seriously diminished the strength and impaired the character of the army.[1] Napoleon yielded to the necessities of his situation: the head-quarters were established at Witepsk, and his nu-

[1] Bout. i. 223, 225. Segur, i. 210. Chamb. i. 241, 243.

merous corps cantoned in the vicinity of the Dwina and the Borysthenes; while the Russian army, no longer molested in its retreat, slowly retired to Smolensko, where Bagrathion was awaiting its approach. CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Already it had become apparent that a difficulty was to be encountered in this war, to which Napoleon in all his former invasions had been a stranger. Pillage and disorders are always the inseparable concomitants of the assemblage of large bodies of men, and were far from being unknown in his previous campaigns; but on these occasions they had been the accompaniment only of the advancing columns; order and discipline were soon established in the rear; and when the troops went into quarters and received their rations regularly, they were maintained with almost as little difficulty as in their own country. But in the Russian war, when disorders once commenced, they never ceased; and, whatever discipline the Emperor established in the immediate vicinity of his own headquarters, the whole lines of communication in the rear were filled with stragglers, and presented a scene of pillage, confusion, and suffering. Napoleon was perfectly aware of the existence of these disorders, and indefatigable not only in his censure to his lieutenants for permitting their existence, but in his own efforts to arrest them; yet it was all in vain: the evil went on continually increasing to the close of the campaign, and proved one great cause of the disasters in which it terminated. The reason was, that the expedition was conducted on a scale which exceeded the bounds of human strength, and had to combat with difficulties which were only augmented by the multitude who were assembled to ensure its success.[1]

Immense difficulty experienced in providing subsistence for the invading army.

Chamb. i. 244, 247. See Napoleon to Berthier, July 10, 1812. Fain. i. 248; and Dumas's Report, Aug. 12, 1812. Chambray, i. 376.

Russia differed essentially from all the countries,

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

with the exception of Spain, in which the French had hitherto carried on war. It has neither the navigable rivers which in Germany, Italy, or the Low Countries, serve as so many arteries to distribute subsistence and resources through the mass of an army; nor the rich fields and far-spread ancient cultivation, which in their fertile plains so often had enabled the Emperor to dispense with the formation of magazines and the incumbrance of convoys, and plunge, regardless of his flanks and rear, into the heart of his adversary's territory. The roads in many places traverse immense forests, where no human habitations are to be seen for leagues together; and, often for a whole day's journey, a few wretched hamlets alone break the gloomy monotony of the wilderness. No distributions of provisions to the soldiers, no efforts made to procure convoys, could for weeks together furnish subsistence to several hundred thousand men and horses, while traversing such a country. It was from the very outset of the campaign, in consequence, found necessary to reduce the rations served out to the soldiers to one-half; and the pittance thus obtained, was inadequate to the support of men undergoing the fatigue which their long marches imposed upon the troops. Such as it was, however, it was in general denied to the detachments or convalescents coming up in the rear, who, finding the magazines emptied by the enormous multitude who had passed before them, were in general sent on without any thing, to find subsistence as they best could, in a country often desert, always wasted by the passage of the corps which were then on the march. Pillage, and the dispersion of the troops for several leagues on either side of the high-roads in quest of subsistence, became thus a matter of neces-

Causes to which it was owing.

sity; no order or discipline could prevent it: a large proportion of the stragglers who thus inundated the country never rejoined their colours, or were only collected in confused multitudes by the light columns organized by the Emperor to arrest the disorders; and before a great part of the army had even seen the enemy, it had already undergone a loss greater than might have been expected in the most bloody campaign.[1]

[1] Chamb. i. 246, 250.

While these movements were taking place in the armies, the Emperor Alexander hastened to Moscow, to accelerate by his presence the armaments in the interior of the empire. By an edict dated from the camp at Drissa, the 12th July, he had already ordered a new levy of one in one hundred males in the provinces nearest to the seat of war; but this supply not being deemed sufficient, a proclamation, couched in the most energetic language, was addressed a few days afterwards from Polotsk to the inhabitants of Moscow:—"Never," said he, "was danger more urgent. The national religion, the throne, the state, can be preserved only by the greatest sacrifices. May the hearts of our illustrious nobles and people be filled with the spirit of true valour; and may God bless the righteous cause! May this holy spirit, emanating from Moscow, spread to the extremities of the empire! May the destruction with which we are menaced recoil upon the head of the invader, and *may Europe, freed from the yoke of servitude, have cause to bless the name of Russia!*"[2]

The Emperor Alexander repairs to Moscow, to hasten the armaments there.

July 12, 1812.

[2] Bout. i. 199, 201.

A similar address was on the 18th published to the whole Russian people:—"The enemy has crossed our frontiers and penetrated into the interior of Russia. Unable by treachery to overturn an empire which has grown with the growth of ages, he

Proclamation to the nation.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

now endeavours to overturn it with the accumulated forces of Europe. Treachery in his heart, honour on his lips, he seeks to seduce the credulous ears, and enchain the manly arms; and if the captive hardly perceives at first his chains under the flowers in which they are hid, tyranny erelong discloses itself in all its odious colours. But Russia has penetrated his views! The path of duty lies before her; she has invoked the protection of the Most High. She opposes to the machinations of the enemy an army undaunted in courage, which burns with the desire to chase the enemy from its country; to destroy those locusts who appear to overload the earth, but whom the earth will reject from its bosom, and deny even the rights of sepulture. We demand forces proportioned to such an object; and that object is, the destruction of a tyrant who oppresses the universe. Great as is the valour of our troops, they have need of reinforcements in the interior to sustain their efforts. We have invited our ancient metropolis of Moscow to give the first example of this heroic devotion. We address the same appeal to all our subjects in Europe or Asia, and to all communities and religions. We invite all classes to a general armament, in order to co-operate with ourselves against the designs of the enemy. Let them find at every step the faithful sons of Russia ready to combat with all their forces, and deaf to all his seductions; despising his fraud, trampling under foot his gold, paralysing by the heroism of true valour all the efforts of his legions of slaves. In every noble may he find a Posankoi, in every ecclesiastic a Palistyn, in every citizen a Menin. Illustrious nobles! in every age you have been the saviours of your country; holy clergy, by your prayers you have

always invoked the Divine blessing on the arms of Russia; people, worthy descendants of the brave Sclavonians, often have you broken the jaws of the lions which were opened to devour you! Unite then, with the cross in your hearts and the sword in your hands, and no human power shall prevail against you."[1] Bout. i. 204. Chamb. i. 370, 371. Fain. i. 316, 317.

While the minds of all ranks were in the highest state of excitement from these proclamations, and a sense of the crisis which awaited their country, the Emperor arrived in Moscow from the army. On the 27th July the nobles and the merchants were invited to a solemn assembly at the imperial palace. Count Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, then read the Emperor's address, and invited all the nobles to contribute to the defence of their country. A levy of ten in one hundred of the male population was immediately proposed and *unanimously* adopted; and they further agreed to clothe and arm them at their own expense. It was calculated that if the other parts of the empire followed this example, which they immediately did, it would produce five hundred thousand warriors. Nor did the assembly of merchants evince less zeal in the public service: a contribution proportioned to the capital of each was instantly agreed to; a voluntary additional subscription was further opened, and in less than an hour the sum subscribed exceeded £180,000. While all hearts were touched by these splendid efforts, the Emperor appeared in the assembly, and after openly explaining the dangers of the state, declared, amidst a transport of generous enthusiasm, that he would exhaust his last resources before giving up the contest.[2] "The disasters," said he, "with which you are menaced, should be considered as the means

Generous and patriotic devotion of the inhabitants of Moscow.

July 27.

[2] Fain. i. 313. Guillaume de Vaudoncourt, 106. Bout. i. 205, 209.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

necessary to complete the ruin of the enemy." History affords few examples of so generous a confidence on the part of the sovereign, and such devoted patriotism on the part of his subjects.

Departure of the Emperor for St Petersburg. Aug. 6.

By these means a powerful auxiliary force was created in the interior, destined to fill up the chasm in the regular army. The example of Moscow was speedily followed by the other cities and provinces in the centre of the empire; and the patriotic levies thus formed, powerfully contributed to the final success of the campaign. Having taken these energetic measures, the Emperor set out for St Petersburg, where he arrived on the 15th August; and, by an edict published on the 16th, an additional levy was ordered in all the provinces not actually the seat of war.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 210.

Opinion of Napoleon on these proclamations.

These proclamations, and some rumours of the extensive preparations going forward in the interior, speedily reached the French headquarters, where they excited no small astonishment. The religious strain of the addresses especially, and the repeated appeals to the protection of Heaven, were the subject of unbounded ridicule among the gay and thoughtless officers of the Grand Army. Not so, however, Napoleon: he received with equal surprise, but very different feelings from those of contempt, the report of these energetic efforts to give a devotional character to the contest. Again and again he caused the proclamations, and the still more impassioned addresses of the metropolitan Archbishop of Moscow to the clergy of the empire, to be read to him; and long did he muse on their contents. "What," said he, "can have wrought such a change in the Emperor Alexander? Whence has sprung all this venom which he has infused into the quarrel? Now there is nothing but the force of arms which can terminate the contest: war

alone can put a period to war. It was to avoid such a necessity that I was so careful, at the outset of the contest, not to implicate myself by any declarations in favour of the re-establishment of Poland; now I see my moderation was a fault."[1] [1] Fain. i. 317, 318.

While the centre of the French army thus advanced to Witepsk, and Barclay retired to Smolensko, Count Wittgenstein, with twenty-five thousand men, was detached from the army of the latter, in order to retain a position upon the Dwina and cover the road to St Petersburg. Oudinot was opposed to him by Napoleon; and he occupied Polotsk with twenty-seven thousand excellent soldiers. On the 30th July he advanced against the Russian general, and a severe action ensued on the following day: the Russian vanguard, under Kutusoff, in the first instance imprudently crossed the Drissa, and was driven back with the loss of a thousand men: but the French under Verdier, hurried on by the eagerness of the pursuit, committed the same fault, and brought on a general action, in which the Russians, after a long and bloody struggle, were victorious. Oudinot, weakened by the loss of four thousand men, retired across the Drissa, and took shelter under the walls of Polotsk, where he was shortly after joined by St Cyr, at the head of twelve thousand Bavarians, which raised his army, notwithstanding its losses, to thirty-five thousand men.[2]

First operations of Count Wittgenstein on the Dwina.

July 31.

[2] Jom. i. 80, 81. Segur, i. 242. Fain. i. 297, 298.

Napoleon was no sooner informed of this check on the Dwina, than he gave vent to severe invectives against Oudinot, who, he insisted, was superior in force to the enemy, and, instead of awaiting an attack, should have taken the initiative, and assumed a victorious attitude towards the enemy. Stung to the quick by these reproaches, which he was conscious

Oudinot, reproached by Napoleon, again moves against Wittgenstein.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

were by no means deserved, the brave marshal obeyed his orders and advanced against his antagonist; while the Emperor, who felt the full importance, during his advance into the interior, of preserving his left flank on the Dwina secure, ordered up St Cyr with his corps of Bavarians, who were estimated at twenty-two thousand men, but who had already wasted away to half that number, by forced marches to Polotsk; and he arrived there on the 6th August. Alexander, on his side, who was not less interested in the operations of a corps which at once covered the road to St Petersburg and menaced the communications of the French army, ordered up powerful reinforcements, sixteen thousand strong, under Count Sternheil, who had been stationed in Finland, but were now rendered disposable by the conclusion of the treaty with Sweden, to the same destination; and the militia of St Petersburg also received orders to advance to his support. Thus every thing announced that the war on the Dwina would become of great, if not decisive importance, before the close of the campaign.[1]

Aug. 6.

[1] Chamb. i. 265, 267. Napoleon to Berthier, July 26, 1812. Ibid, i. 378.

Operations of Tormasoff against Schwartzenberg.

On the other flank, Tormasoff, finding that the Austrians under Schwartzenberg were not advancing against him, fell suddenly on the corps of Saxons under Reynier, at Kobrin, and on the 23d July made prisoners an entire brigade of their best troops. It became indispensable, therefore, to support the Saxon corps by the Austrians under Schwartzenberg; and thus Napoleon lost the support of that auxiliary force, on which he had reckoned to supply the prodigious waste of human life in the campaign.[2]

[2] Jom. iv. 80. Fain. i. 291, 292. Bout. ii. 75, 76.

While Napoleon lay inactive at Witepsk, he received two pieces of intelligence which had a material influence upon his ulterior views in the campaign.

The first was the peace of Bucharest, concluded on July 14th between the Russians and the Turks, whereby a large part of their army on the Danube was rendered a disposable force: and the second, the discovery of the treaty of the 24th March preceding, between the Swedes and the Emperor Alexander, which not only promised to set free the Russian army in Finland, but threatened his rear with a descent from the Swedish forces. Information at the same time was received of powerful reinforcements to the army of Tormasoff, which were approaching from the Danube, and of great additions to the corps of Wittgenstein, which might soon be expected from the army of observation in Finland. At the same period, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was signed between Russia and England, by which a subsidy of £800,000 was provided to the former power; and it was stipulated, that in the event of the French invasion endangering the Russian fleet, it should be removed, as a measure of security, to the British shores.[1]

Information received at Witepsk of the conclusion of peace between the Russians and Turks, and the alliance by Russia with Sweden and England.

[1] Jom. iv. 81, 82. Segur, i. 244. Fain. i. 311.

These important events, and the intelligence of the prodigious armaments preparing in the interior by the activity of the Emperor Alexander, and the patriotic efforts of his subjects, led to the most serious reflections at Napoleon's headquarters. The expedience of an advance into the heart of the empire was discussed in his military council for some days. Several of his generals openly dissuaded him from the enterprise, as fraught with the greatest hazard; but after they had all delivered their opinions, the Emperor expressed his own as follows: "Why should we remain at Witepsk? the vicinity of the rivers, indeed, make it a defensible position in summer; but in winter what would avail their frozen streams? We

Arguments against any further advance at the French headquarters, and answer of Napoleon.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

must, therefore, construct every thing for ourselves: whereas at Moscow all is ready-made to our hands. A return to Wilna would be still more dangerous: it would necessarily lead to a retreat to the Vistula, and the loss of the whole of Lithuania. At Smolensko, again, we shall find at least a fortified town, and a position on the Dnieper. The example of Charles XII. is out of place: he did not fail because his enterprise was impracticable, but because he had not force sufficient to accomplish it. In war, fortune has an equal share with ability in success: if we wait for an entirely favourable train of circumstances, we shall never attempt any thing: to gain an object we must commence it. No blood has yet been shed: Russia is too powerful to yield without fighting: Alexander will not treat till a great battle has been fought. It is a mistake to suppose he is retiring from any premeditated design: his armies retreated from the Dwina to effect a junction with Bagrathion; from Witepsk, to unite with him at Smolensko. The hour of battle is arrived: you will not have Smolensko without a battle; you will not have Moscow without a battle. I cannot think of taking up my winter-quarters in the middle of July. Our troops are always in spirits when they advance: a prolonged and defensive position is not suited to the French genius. Are we accustomed to halt behind rivers? to remain cantoned in huts? to manœuvre in the same spot during eight months of privations? The line of defence of the Dwina or Borysthenes are illusory: let winter come with its snows, and where are your barriers? Why should we leave the fanatical people of the East time to empty their immense plains and fall upon us? Why should we remain here eight months, when twenty days are sufficient to

accomplish our purpose? Let us anticipate winter and its reflections. We must strike soon and strongly, or we shall be in danger. We must be in Moscow in a month, or we shall never be there. Peace awaits us under its walls. Should Alexander still persist, I will treat with his nobles: Moscow hates St Petersburg; the effects of that jealousy are incalculable."—With such arguments did Napoleon justify his resolution to advance into the interior of the empire; but, in truth, the campaigns of Echmuhl and Jena had spoiled him for the delays of ordinary war, or the precautions requisite between equal combatants: his career seemed blasted, unless he stepped from victory to victory; and even the dangers of a Russian winter were preferable, in his estimation, to the insupportable tedium of a lengthened residence at Witepsk.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 224. Fain. i. 321, 324.

In truth, the result is not always a proof of the wisdom either of military or political measures, because many things enter into its composition which cannot be foreseen by the greatest sagacity: a due appreciation of all the considerations which present themselves at the moment, is the utmost that can be effected by human ability. Before we condemn Napoleon's advance to Moscow as imprudent, we should recollect that similar temerity had, in all his former wars, been crowned with success; that the experience he had had of Russian firmness at Austerlitz and Friedland, afforded no ground for supposing that the Emperor would resist the force of circumstances which had more than once constrained the pride of Austria and Prussia to submit; that a throne raised by the sword would be endangered by the least pause even in the career of success which had established it; that the peace with Turkey and Sweden

Reflections on this determination.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

would shortly expose his flanks to attack from forces which could not as yet be brought into the field; and that the fact of his actually entering Moscow with a victorious army, demonstrates that he possessed the means of reducing the Russians to that extremity, in which, according to all former experience, he might expect a glorious peace. These considerations, while they tend to exculpate Napoleon from blame in the important step which he now took, enhance to the highest degree the glory of the Emperor and people of Russia, by showing that the success which ultimately crowned their efforts, was owing to a degree of firmness in adversity which was deemed beyond the bounds of human fortitude.

Barclay advances against the right of the French army.

The first step in the renewal of hostilities was taken by the Russian general, whose forces, since his junction with Bagrathion, were raised to one hundred and twenty thousand men. The dispersed cantonments of the French army presented an opportunity for striking a blow with something approaching to equality of numbers,—an object of the utmost importance, as their vast amount, when all collected, was still too great to justify the risking of a general battle; and it was indispensable, by all means, to protract the war, in order to give time for the completion of the armaments in the interior. With this view, the Russians broke up early on the morning of

Aug. 7.

August 7, and advanced in three great columns against the French quarters. The mass of their forces, one hundred and fourteen thousand strong, was directed towards Roudnia, whilst Platoff, with a chain

Aug. 8.

of Cossacks, covered their movements. At Inkowo, this enterprising commander fell upon the advanced guard of Murat, under Sebastiani, consisting of six thousand horse and a regiment of light infantry, and

defeated it with the loss of five hundred prisoners. This check roused the genius of Napoleon. He instantly dispatched couriers in all directions to collect his corps, and assemble them in a body round his headquarters; and moved from Witespk on the 13th August, in the direction of Smolensko.[1] To repair the error which he had committed in leaving his forces so much dispersed, and giving the enemy the advantage of the initiative, he resolved to turn the left of the Russian army, and, by crossing the Dnieper, gain possession of Smolensko, and thus cut them off from the interior of the empire. With this view, on the 13th three bridges were thrown over the Dnieper, and two hundred thousand men suddenly assembled on the shores of that river. Amongst them the corps of Davoust was particularly distinguished by the strength of its divisions, and the admirable state of its discipline and equipment. Napoleon passed in a day the woody and rugged ridge which separates the Dwina from the Dnieper, and beheld, with a transport of youthful enthusiasm, that celebrated stream, which the Romans knew only by their defeats, and whose course to the Black Sea awakened those dreams of Oriental ambition, which from his earliest years had been floating in his mind.[1]

[1] Chamb. i. 292. Segur, i. 246, 251. Bout. i. 247, 248.

Napoleon advances against Smolensko.

Aug. 13.

[1] Fain. i. 354. Segur, i. 252. Bout. i. 253. Chamb. i. 292.

The French army crossed the Dnieper at several fords in order of battle, with the Emperor in the centre on horseback, and at Liady entered the territories of Old Russia. Advancing forward, Marshals Ney and Murat, who headed the leading column of the army, overtook, near Krasnoi, General Newerofskoi, who with the rearguard, six thousand strong and twelve hundred horse, was slowly retreating in the direction of Smolensko. This little corps, which had been detached by Barclay to the other side of

Heroic action of Newerofskoi, near Krasnoi.

Aug. 15.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

the Dnieper, after he had retired with the remainder of his troops to the left, found itself assailed on all sides by eighteen thousand horse, without the possibility of obtaining assistance from its comrades, who were on the opposite side of the river. The head of the retreating column being overtaken and stopped by the light cavalry of the French, the horsemen who formed the advance were speedily driven into the ranks of the infantry; and the situation of the Russians was the more critical from the inexperienced nature of their troops, who were new levies that had never seen fire. Many generals in such circumstances would have deemed resistance impossible, and proposed a surrender; but Newerofskoi thought only of his duty. Instantly dividing his little army into two hollow squares, which were soon after united into one, he retired slowly and in admirable order over the immense open plains which adjoin the Dnieper, enveloped on all sides by innumerable squadrons, who charged them more than *forty times* during the day, and in some instances broke through the rampart of bayonets, and cut down the Russian officers in the very centre of their squares. Nevertheless, they always formed again; and this little band of heroes, still forming a lesser square when the larger was broken or weakened by loss, steadily retired during the whole day, repulsing, by an incessant rolling fire, the repeated charges of the French cavalry, and at length, on the approach of night, reached Korytnia with unbroken ranks, though with the loss of eleven hundred men and five pieces of cannon.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 255. Fain. i. 359. Segur, i. 260. Chamb. i. 302, 303.

Napoleon continued to press upon the retreating Russian columns; but on the following day Newerofskoi effected a junction with Raeffskoi, and their

united force being nineteen thousand men, they resolved to throw themselves into Smolensko, and there defend themselves to the last extremity, in order to afford time for the main body of the Russian army to advance to its succour. Barclay and Bagrathion, meanwhile, being apprised of the approach of the French towards that town, and the imminent danger of their columns on the other side of the river, retreated with the utmost expedition in that direction. At daybreak on the morning of the 16th, the main Russian army marched on Smolensko, where Raeffskoi and Newerofskoi, with nineteen thousand men, were shut up in presence of the whole French army.[1]

Both armies approach Smolensko.

[1] Bout. i. 257. Segur, i. 265, 266.

The ancient and venerable city of Smolensko is situated on two hills, which there restrain within a narrow channel the stream of the Dnieper. Two bridges secure the communication between the two divisions of the city and opposite sides of the river. An old wall, thirty-five feet high and eighteen feet thick, surmounted by thirty lofty towers, formed its principal protection. In front of this rampart was placed a dry ditch, a covered way, and a glacis; but the ditch was shallow, and exposed to no flanking fire, and the covered way had no communication with the body of the place. Fifty guns of old construction were mounted upon the ramparts, but they were without carriages and in bad order; and the ditch was wholly awanting where the walls adjoined the Dnieper. Three gates only formed an entrance into the town, one of which led to Krasnoi, one to a suburb, and the third across the Dnieper to Moscow. Near the gate of Krasnoi was a half-moon beyond the ditch, intended to cover a breach in the walls, still called the 'Royal Breach,' made by Sigismund, King of Poland, in the days when Sarmatian grandeur had

Description of that city.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

not yet been torn in pieces by democratic frenzy and external cupidity. A citadel of more modern construction was still less capable of defence, from the decayed state of its ramparts, which in many places might be ascended without difficulty. The cathedral, a venerable old edifice with vast gilded domes, was an object of the highest religious veneration to the peasantry of Russia; and being the frontier and one of the chief cities of the old empire, the preservation of the place was an object of the utmost solicitude to the soldiers.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 266. Bout. i. 258, 259. Chamb. i. 311, 312.

First attack of Ney on the citadel, which is repulsed. Aug. 16.

At four in the morning, Murat and Ney appeared before Smolensko, and the Emperor, having arrived an hour after, ordered an immediate attack on the citadel by Ney's corps, which Raeffskoi repulsed with great loss before any succour from the main army arrived. Still the utmost anxiety filled the breast of the Russian generals, and every eye was anxiously turned towards the side of Krasnoi, from which the main army might be expected; for the French columns, in enormous masses, were fast crowding round the town, and already the standards of a hundred and fifty thousand men might be counted from the spires of the cathedral. At length vast clouds of dust were seen afar off, in the plain on the opposite side of the river, and through their openings long black columns, resplendent with steel, appeared advancing with the utmost rapidity towards the walls of the city. It was Barclay and Bagrathion hastening to the relief of their comrades, at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men. Bagrathion was the first to enter, and, having secured the important communication of the bridges, instantly reinforced the heroic band who had so nobly maintained their post against the enemy.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 268. Fain. i. 363, 364. Bout i. 260. Chamb. i. 298.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Napoleon, conceiving that the enemy was resolved to defend Smolensko with all his forces, immediately made his dispositions for a general attack on the following day. His army, exclusive of the corps of Junot and the Viceroy, which were not come up, amounted to a hundred and eighty thousand men, with five hundred pieces of cannon. The Imperial guard was in the centre: Murat, Ney, and Davoust, at the head of their respective forces, were prepared to commence the attack. The Emperor planted his tent in the midst of the first line, almost within cannon-shot of the city.[1]

Napoleon's dispositions for a general attack on the town.

[1] Segur. i. 270. Fain. i. 367.

Never was a nobler spectacle presented in military annals than the French army exhibited on the day preceding the grand attack on Smolensko. The simultaneously converging of so vast a multitude from all directions to the westward, presented to those who watched their movements from the domes of the cathedral, at first a confused multitude of men, horses, artillery, and chariots, who covered the earth as far as the eye could reach; but by degrees order began to appear in the chaos: the different corps and squadrons took up their allotted ground; the artillery ranged itself on the prominent eminences, and the admirable arrangements of modern discipline appeared in their highest lustre. Silently the troops defiled out of the crowd, and took up their appointed stations; no sound of drums or trumpets was heard, as on a day of parade: the solemnity of the occasion, the awful nature of the contest which awaited them, had impressed every heart: even the voice of the chiefs when giving the word of command was grave, sometimes faltering, though with other emotions than those of fear.[2]

Noble appearance of the attacking army.

[2] Chamb. i. 309, 310.

But the Russian general had no intention of

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

hazarding a general battle in a situation where he was exposed to the risk of being cut off from his communications with Moscow and the interior. Contrary to the opinion of Bagrathion and the principal officers of both armies, he resolved to retreat, and hold Smolensko merely by such a rearguard as might enable the troops to withdraw on the road to Moscow in safety. Bagrathion accordingly defiled out of the city at four in the morning of the 17th, in the direction of Elnia, to secure the road to the capital, and took post with the main body of the army behind the little stream of the Kolodnia, about four miles distant: while Barclay, with the corps of Doctoroff and Bagawouth, still held the ramparts of Smolensko. Napoleon, exasperated at the sight of the retiring columns, and unable, after several efforts, to find a ford in the river in order to reach them, ordered a general assault, and at two o'clock in the afternoon all the columns approached the ramparts.[1]

The Russian army retires in the night, leaving a strong rearguard only in the city. Aug. 17.

[1] Segur, i. 275. Bout. i. 262, 299. Fain. i. 367, 368. Chamb. i. 314, 315.

Ney advanced to the attack of the citadel; Davoust and Lobau towards the suburbs which lay before the ramparts; while Poniatowski, with sixty pieces of cannon, was destined to descend and enfilade the banks of the Dnieper, and destroy the bridges which connected the old and new city. But the Russians were not unprepared for their reception. The suburbs were filled with musketeers prepared to contest every inch of ground; and the ramparts, defended by two hundred pieces of heavy cannon and thirty thousand admirable troops, vomited an incessant fire on the assailants; while the French masses, preceded by a numerous artillery, advanced with stern regularity to the attack. After an obstinate conflict, the besiegers established themselves in the suburbs, and a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, within

Bloody attack on the town, which proves unsuccessful. Aug. 17.

point-blank range, battered the walls of the city. The French army, stationed on the amphitheatre of surrounding heights, beheld with breathless anxiety the impending conflict, and announced with loud shouts the advance of their comrades. The Viceroy's corps and that of Junot successively arrived before five o'clock, and formed the reserve of the assailants; so that nearly two hundred thousand combatants were engaged in the assault, or grouped round the town, prepared to support the more advanced columns. But it was in vain that their batteries thundered against the ancient walls; that column after column advanced through a storm of shot to the assault of the citadel; and that the ardent intrepidity of the Poles sought to wrest from Russia the key of their independence, so often in former days mastered by their arms. The thickness of the ramparts defied the efforts of the artillery, and the valour of the assailants sought in vain to wrest the gates from their defenders. Towards evening, the French howitzers succeeded in setting fire to some houses near the ramparts, and the flames, seizing on the wooden streets, spread with frightful rapidity; but the firmness of the Russians remained unshaken, and, placed between the fire of the enemy in front and the burning city behind, they continued to present an undaunted resistance to the assaults of their enemies.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 275, 277. Bout. i. 266, 267. Fain. i. 368, 371. Chamb. i. 315, 318.

Discouraged by the failure of such repeated and bloody attacks, and having experienced the total inability of his artillery, without regular approaches, to breach the massy walls of the town, Napoleon, at seven in the evening, commanded his troops to draw off, and at nine the cannonade ceased at all points. The Russians, after an arduous conflict,

Repulse of Napoleon, and results of the battle.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

remained masters of the city; and their advanced posts re-occupied the covered way. Thus the French Emperor, who had brought seventy thousand men to the attack, had the mortification to find all his efforts foiled by a Russian corps whose force never exceeded thirty thousand men, supported by the formidable ramparts which he had the boldness to expect to carry by a *coup-de-main*. Fully fifteen thousand men were lost to the invaders in these fruitless assaults; while the Russians, on the 17th alone, lost nearly six thousand, and during the whole conflict not less than ten thousand men.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 268. Segur, i. 276. Chamb. i. 332. Fain. i. 377, 378.

Splendid appearance of the burning city.

The weather was calm and serene, and the unclouded sky reminded the Italian soldiers of the sunsets in their beautiful country. To the roar of artillery and the tumult of mortal conflict, succeeded a night of tranquillity unusual in the midst of such numerous assemblages of men, the result of the fatigue and exhaustion of the preceding days. In the midst of this momentary repose the fires spread with unresisted violence, and a vast column of flame ascended from the interior of the city. Around this blazing centre, the corps of the French army were grouped in dense masses for several miles in circumference; the light of their watch-fires illuminated the heavens; but every eye was arrested by the spectacle of the burning city within. A dark band in front marked the yet unbroken line of the battlements; every loophole and embrasure was clearly defined by the resplendent light behind, whence volumes of flame and burning smoke arose, as from a vast volcano, over half the heavens: a lurid light, like that of Vesuvius, was cast over the extended bivouacs of the French army, while the lofty domes of the cathedral,[2] still untouched by the conflagration, stood

[2] Segur, i. 277. Bout. i. 269. Chamb. i. 318, 319.

in dark magnificence above the ocean of flame. The troops beheld with dismay the splendid spectacle, and, uncertain of the event, rested in suspense all night on their arms.

At three in the morning, a patrol of Davoust scaled the walls, and penetrated without resistance into the interior of the town. Finding neither inhabitants nor opponents, he returned to his corps, and the French advanced guard speedily entered the walls. They found the streets deserted. The work of destruction, begun by the French howitzers, had been completed by the voluntary sacrifice of the inhabitants, who had fled with the retiring corps of their countrymen; and the invading columns, in all the pomp of military splendour, traversed in silence a ruined city, filled only with smoking walls and dying men. Never did the horrors of war appear in more striking colours than to the French troops as they entered that devoted city. Almost all the houses were consumed, or in ruins; dying soldiers or citizens encumbered the streets; a few miserable wretches were alone to be seen ransacking the yet smoking remains, for any relics of their property which might have survived the conflagration. In the midst of this scene of woe, the cathedral and churches which had withstood the flames, alone offered an asylum to the unfortunate inhabitants; while the martial columns of the French army, marching in the finest order to the sound of military music through the wreck occasioned by their arms, afforded a grand and imposing spectacle. So skilfully, however, had the Russian retreat been managed, that the magazines in the town had all been destroyed; the wounded, and great part of the inhabitants withdrawn; and the bridges over the Dnieper

Retreat of the Russians from Smolensko. Aug. 18.

[1] Segur, i. 279, 280. Lab. 105. Chamb. i. 320. Bout. i. 269, 270. Larrey, iv. 30.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

broken down, amidst the horrors of the nocturnal conflagration following that dreadful day,[1] leaving naked walls, and the cannon which mounted them, as the only trophy to the conqueror.

The abandonment of Smolensko, long regarded as the bulwark of Old Russia, was a matter of profound regret to the Russian soldiers, and furnished Napoleon with abundant matter for congratulation in his bulletins. But he soon found that the retreating enemy had lost none of their courage from this catastrophe. A column of French having passed the Dnieper at a ford, and entered the eastern suburb of Smolensko, were instantly attacked, and driven back across the river, by Baron Korf and the Russian rearguard, while the main body leisurely continued their retreat towards their brethren under Bagrathion.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 270. Segur, i. 281. Moniteur, Sept. 2, 1812. Chamb. i. 321.

In conducting this retreat, however, the Russian commander had considerable difficulties to encounter. Bagrathion had retired by the route to Moscow, in order to prevent the enemy from interposing between the army and that metropolis; while Barclay, finding that route exposed to the fire of the French artillery when his columns began to withdraw, had taken the road to St Petersburg, and every mile that he advanced led him farther from his comrades. On this occasion, the bad effects of the independent and co-ordinate command which Barclay and Bagrathion had of their respective armies, and the jealousy and misunderstanding to which it necessarily gave rise, had wellnigh proved fatal to the empire; for if the two armies had marched a day longer on these diverging lines, their subsequent junction would have become impossible, and Napoleon, with his immense host interposed between them, would have proved

Circular march of Barclay to regain the Moscow road and Bagrathion's corps.

irresistible. In these circumstances, a circular flank movement became necessary; a hazardous operation at any time, but more especially so to a retreating army, encumbered with an immense train of cannon, and in presence of an enterprising enemy. Nevertheless, Barclay, seeing no alternative, adopted this perilous course, and for a day the fate of Russia was suspended by a thread; for a vigorous attack by Napoleon on the moving columns would have renewed the disasters of Austerlitz. Fortunately, Napoleon was ignorant of the advantage which lay within his grasp, or was not in a condition to avail himself of it; and a severe action with the rearguard alone took place, in circumstances when a general action might have been expected. Barclay, fully sensible of the impending danger, detached a strong body from his army to reinforce the rearguard of Bagrathion on the Moscow road, with instructions to proceed by forced marches to the point of junction, and defend to the last extremity the first tenable position, in order to give the main army time to regain, by cross roads, the Moscow route.[1]

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

[1] Bout. i. 272. Jom. iv. 96, 99. Chamb. i. 222, 223.

Napoleon, having re-established the bridges over the Dnieper, advanced his columns both on the roads of Smolensko and St Petersburg. Ney passed the river before daybreak on the 19th, by the light of the burning suburbs, and advanced on the Moscow road as far as Valentina, where the Russian rearguard, stationed by Barclay to cover his cross movement from the Petersburg to the Moscow roads, was strongly posted on the opposite side of a ravine, through which the little stream of the Kolodnia flowed. The troops engaged were at first inconsiderable, but they were gradually strengthened on both sides, and the combat which ensued was of the

Battle of Valentina. Aug. 19.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

most obstinate description. Notwithstanding his utmost efforts, the Russian general Touczoff was driven from his first position, and compelled to retire behind the rivulet; but being there reinforced by fresh troops, and eight pieces of heavy artillery, which Barclay brought up in person to the scene of danger, he renewed the conflict, and drove the enemy back again across the stream.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 276. Chamb. i. 328. Jom. iv. 100.

Measures of Napoleon to restore the combat.

Napoleon was no sooner informed of the serious and unexpected resistance which Ney experienced from the Russian rearguard, than he dispatched orders to the division Gudin of Davoust's corps, already signalized at the battle of Auerstadt,* to advance to his support; and at the same time, fearing that the whole enemy's army had assembled for battle, gave directions to Morand, who with another division of Davoust's corps was a little in the rear on a cross road, which would have brought him direct upon the Russian flank, to halt and retire. This retrograde movement was performed with great difficulty, as at the time the order was received Morand's troops were involved in an old pine wood, where the intermixture of the advancing and retreating columns created extreme confusion; and it was hard to say whether the Russians engaged owed most to this unusual want of decision on the part of the Emperor, or to the hesitation of Junot, who, having received orders merely to take a position on the right bank of the Dnieper immediately after crossing it, had not moral courage enough to undertake the responsibility of attacking the Russian rearguard posted beyond that river, when engaged with Ney,[2] though his position would have enabled him to assail it with every advantage in rear, at the moment when it was

[2] Fain. i. 385, 386. Chamb. i. 325, 326. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 2, 1812.

* *Ante*, v. 738.

already hard pressed by the enemy in front, and he was strenuously urged to do so by Murat.

Thus left to his own resources, with the assistance only of Gudin's division twelve thousand strong, Ney, however, resolutely maintained the contest. He repeatedly attacked the enemy, both with musketry and the bayonet: Gudin's men outdid even their former glorious exploits: four times did they cross the stream with the utmost intrepidity, and ascend the opposite bank with fixed bayonets; but they were constantly driven back by the devoted heroism of the Russians, who, aware of the vital importance of maintaining the position, were resolved to perish to the last man rather than abandon it. The generals on both sides came up to the spot: General Gudin was struck down by a cannon-shot when bravely leading his men to the charge; and General Touczoff* made prisoner in the midst of his staff by a furious irruption of the French cavalry. But the loss of their leaders made no diminution in the fury of the combat: both sides fought with invincible obstinacy. The contest continued with various success till nightfall; but at the close of the day the Russians retained their position, and, under cover of their heroic rearguard, the main army of Barclay had regained in safety the Moscow road.[1]

Desperate valour displayed on both sides.

[1] Jom. iv. 100, 102. Bout. i. 276, 283. Fain. i. 382, 384. Segur, i. 299, 300. Chamb. i. 325, 330.

This action, in which the French lost eight thousand, and the Russians six thousand men, had an important effect on the spirit of both armies. Ney commenced the combat with twenty-five thousand men; and, by the accession of Gudin, his force was raised to thirty-five thousand: while General Touczoff had hardly five thousand under his orders in the first in-

Results of this bloody action.

* The commander of the cavalry, not the general of division bearing a similar name.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

stance; and the whole reinforcements which were afterwards brought up to his assistance did not raise his force to above twenty-five thousand men. The brave General Gudin was killed by the cannon shot which felled him while leading his troops across the stream, already red with human blood; and his loss, in the opinion of Napoleon, would more than have balanced a victory.[1]

[1] Compare Bout. i. 284. Jom. iv. 102. Segur, i. 299, 300. Chamb. i. 327.

Singular good fortune of the Russians on this occasion.

Notwithstanding their devoted valour, however, the Russians owed much to fortune on this occasion. Had Napoleon pressed forward with the main body of his forces, all the firmness of their rearguard could not have saved their army from total defeat while accomplishing their perilous movement. They themselves were astonished at not being attacked in flank by the cavalry under Murat; and the conduct of Junot, in not hastening to the scene of action, appeared so inexcusable, that it was with the utmost difficulty the Emperor was dissuaded from at once depriving him of his command. Morand, with his numerous division of Davoust's corps, was abreast of Valentina, at so short a distance from the Russian right that every cannon-shot was distinctly heard; and, if not restrained by the Emperor's orders, he might, by suddenly appearing, have decided the victory: and, finally, Napoleon himself did not arrive on the field till three on the following morning, when he found only the dead and the dying, instead of the desperate conflict which his eagle eye might have converted into an important victory.[2]

[2] Segur, i. 301, 304, 305. Jom. iv. 103. Chamb. i. 329. Fain. i. 385, 386.

Napoleon's visit to the field of battle.

The Russians in the night continued their retreat, and retired by the Moscow road without further molestation from their enemies: and Napoleon visited, at break of day, the field of battle. The regiments of Gudin's division were reduced to skeletons: the soldiers black with powder, and their

bayonets bent with the violence of the encounter; the earth ploughed with cannon-shot, the trees torn and mutilated, the field covered with broken carriages, wounded horses, and mangled bodies. The horrors of the scene had filled the minds of the survivors with melancholy; but the presence of Napoleon restored their military ardour. He was prodigal of his praise, and of those acts of kindness by which he won the hearts of his soldiers. "With such men," he exclaimed, "you might conquer the world: this is the most glorious of our fields: the dead have won immortal glory." With his own hands he delivered an eagle to the 127th regiment, which had not hitherto acquired that honour, and loaded the troops of the other corps with decorations: the regiments were formed successively in hollow circles, in the midst of which the Emperor enquired of the officers who were the most deserving, and, if the men confirmed their nomination, the appointment of the persons named to superior rank was instantly completed. These honours, bestowed at such a moment and from such hands, filled the troops with enthusiasm: and the shattered remains of the regiments, proud of their diminished numbers, exulted in the thought that Europe was resounding with their praise.[1]

[1] Ségur, i. 307, 309. Fain. i. 390. Chamb. i. 330.

In truth, a great effort was necessary to support the spirit of the army, which was considerably damped by the fatigues and dangers of the campaign. The objects that met the eye in Germany, and as far as the Oder, reminded the soldiers of France: but in Poland and Lithuania every thing wore a novel and gloomy aspect. The troops were seized with disquietude at finding themselves incessantly advancing through gloomy forests, intersected only by swampy streams or rocky dells: their

General uneasiness and depression of the French army.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

spirits sank at the interminable solitudes which surrounded them in every direction; and the consciousness of their numbers added only to their apprehensions, from the obvious inadequacy of the country to provide for their necessities. The young conscripts, who advanced upon the traces of the Grand Army, were depressed by the melancholy remains which every where presented themselves; dead horses, broken carriages, and dying men, obstructed the roads, and infected the atmosphere: while the veterans who had combated in the front, contrasted the miserable quarters which they had gained amidst the ruins of Smolensko with the smiling villages they had abandoned in their native land. Even the generals were shaken by the general contagion: and those who had risen to the highest rank sighed to think that, after a life spent in arms, and wealth honourably acquired, they were reduced like common soldiers to the never-ending hardships of wretched food, incessant fatigue, and squalid habitations.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 286, 287, 291.

Enormous losses already sustained from sickness and fatigue.

Nor were the reports of the hospitals or the commissariat calculated to allay these gloomy anticipations. Already the march through Lithuania had cost the allied troops a half, the native French a fourth of their army, miserable victims of intemperance, disease, and fatigue: out of thirty thousand Bavarians who set out from Munich, only twelve thousand entered upon the first actions on the Dwina.* Typhus fever

* "At its departure from the Bavarian states this corps was estimated at thirty thousand men; on leaving Wilna it was still twenty-five thousand; but the march to Witepsk, without any other subsistence than two rations of bad bread each man, reduced it a half: so that on its entry into Polotsk, without having ever seen the enemy, it could only muster twelve thousand combatants. Thirteen thousand five hundred men had been lost by fatigue or want of provisions; of whom eight thousand were already no more, and the greater part of the sick gave no hope of recovery. It may easily be imagined from this in what

and dysentery, the well-known attendants on military suffering, had every where broken out in the most alarming manner, and swept off thousands in all the great hospitals of the army. Wilna and Witepsk were converted into vast charnel-houses, where contagion completed the unfinished work of human destruction: and even the spacious convents of Smolensko, which had not suffered from the flames, were incapable of containing the multitudes of wounded who had been disabled under its walls. Such was the accumulation of corpses around the ramparts of that city, that they exceeded all that the strength of the survivors could bury; and the smell which they diffused in every direction gave rise to a frightful epidemic, which in the end proved more fatal to the troops than the sword of the enemy. All the cottages in its environs were filled with wounded soldiers, both French and Russian, who, crowded together often without either straw or provisions, made known their existence and sufferings by the groans and lamentations which they uttered. Hundreds were forgotten, and perished miserably in the general confusion: the streets were blocked up by the endless files of chariots, bearing the sick and maimed, which incessantly traversed them; and such was the multitude of amputated limbs which there was no time to destroy, that they accumulated in bloody heaps and infected the air with their smell.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 291, 312, 313. Chamb. i. 333. St Cyr, Hist. Mil. iii. 79, 105, 62.

a miserable state the troops under arms were: all, generals and soldiers, had been seized with a violent dysentery, which, in many cases, was combined with other complaints. It could not be otherwise; for the soldier had nothing to nourish him but meat without either bread or vegetables, in a country where the water was bad. There were no fermented liquors, and the mills were destroyed. It was the same with all the other corps in the French army."—Marshal St Cyr, *Histoire Militaire*, iii. 62, 63.

CHAP. LXVI.

1812.

Napoleon's reasons for a further advance.

To any other mind than that of Napoleon, these disastrous circumstances would have furnished reasons for delay: but to him they afforded only additional and cogent arguments for an advance. He was aware how much his empire depended on opinion, and how rapidly these sinister auguries would be known to Europe if not eclipsed by the lustre of a victory. "The condition of the army," said he, "is frightful: I know it. At Wilna, one-half were stragglers; now they amount to two-thirds: there is not a moment to lose: we must grasp at peace, and it can only be found at Moscow. Besides, the state of the army is such as to render a halt impossible: constant advance alone keeps it together: you may lead it forward, but you cannot arrest its movement. We have advanced too far to retreat. If I had nothing in view but military glory, I would have nothing to do but return to Smolensko, and extend my wings on either side so as to crush Wittgenstein and Tormasoff. These operations would be brilliant; they would form a glorious termination to the campaign; but they would not conclude the war. Peace is before us: we have only to march eight days to obtain it: so near our object, it is impossible to deliberate: let us advance to Moscow." [1]

[1] Segur, i. 293. Fain. i. 407, 408.

Reasons which induced the Russian generals to prepare for battle.

On the other side, the feelings of the Russian generals, as to the propriety of a further retreat, underwent a change. The object in retiring from the frontier had been to draw the enemy into a situation where his original superiority of force might be diminished by the fatigues and the diseases incident to a protracted advance. These causes, joined to the bloody battles recently fought, had already operated so powerfully, that the effective French army was little more than half its original

amount, while the losses of the Russians were more than supplied by the great armaments prepared in the interior. But a further retreat would sacrifice all these advantages, because it would surrender to the enemy the capital and the richest provinces of the empire, from whence the principal resources for maintaining the war were to be drawn, while the invader would reap all the fruits of a victory without its dangers. The troops had long murmured at continually retiring before their enemies; and the prospect of abandoning Moscow without a struggle, was likely to excite the utmost dissatisfaction not only in the army but the nation. These reasons induced Barclay to resolve to give battle on the first convenient situation; and he dispatched orders to General Milaradowitch to hasten the levies in the interior, and direct the corps when formed to Wiazma.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 286, 287.

Napoleon was still further encouraged to advance from Smolensko by the intelligence which he received at that juncture from the armies on his two flanks. On the 12th August, Schwartzenberg, who had arrived with his corps of Austrians to the support of Regnier, attacked Tormasoff with nearly forty thousand men, who could only collect to oppose him twenty-five thousand. In an early part of the engagement, the left wing of the Russians was turned, notwithstanding the strength of their position, which was covered both in front and flank by morasses; but the Austrians did not follow up their advantages with sufficient vigour; and, by throwing back his left wing, Tormasoff contrived to prolong the contest without serious loss till nightfall, when he retired from the field, and got behind the Styr, with the loss of four thousand men and a few pieces

Operations of Schwartzenberg against Tormasoff. Aug. 12.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

of cannon. This victory, though by no means decisive, preserved the Grand Duchy of Warsaw from invasion, and relieved Napoleon, for the time at least, from the disquietudes which he was beginning to feel for the communications in his rear.[1]

[1] Jom. iv. 105. Segur, i. 285.

And of St Cyr against Wittgenstein. Aug. 12.

On the other side, Wittgenstein, on the day on which Tormasoff was engaged with the Austrians, attacked the advanced guard of Oudinot on the Svoiana, and drove it back with the loss of fifteen hundred men. Oudinot, in consequence, fell back to Polotsk, where he was joined by the Bavarians, and his army raised to above thirty-five thousand men. Wittgenstein, with only twenty-four thousand, had the courage to hazard a general attack on the French lines posted in front of Polotsk, and a bloody action ensued on the 17th August, without any decisive advantage on either side, but in which Oudinot was severely wounded. On the 18th, the battle was renewed, and both sides fought with the utmost obstinacy; but in the end, although their cavalry had driven the French to the walls of the city, the Russians retired with the loss of seven cannon and two thousand men: the French, however, who had suffered nearly as much, were in no condition to follow up their advantage. St Cyr, who commanded after the loss of Oudinot, was, in consequence, made a marshal of the empire; but, notwithstanding his success, he did not move forward till the 22d, when his advanced guard, consisting of the Bavarians under General Wrede, made an attack on the Russian rear-guard, but experienced a severe defeat. Wittgenstein removed his headquarters to the fortified position of Sewokhino, where he awaited the reinforcements which were expected from Finland and St Petersburg.[1]

Aug. 17.

Aug. 18.

[1] Bout. ii. 55, 60. Jom. iv. 106, 107. Fain. i. 398, 402. St Cyr, iii. 60, 100.

CHAP. LXVI.

Still further to the right, Marshal Macdonald having advanced to the neighbourhood of Riga with the corps under his command, consisting chiefly of Prussians, General Essen made a vigorous sortie, and attacked General Grawert at Eckaw, whom he defeated with the loss of twelve hundred men. The operations, in consequence, languished on the side of Livonia; and nothing of importance occurred till a later period of the campaign.[1]

1812. And of Macdona'd against Riga.

[1] Bout. ii. 30, 62. Jom. iv. 108.

The corps of Marshal Victor, which had now come up to the Dwina, became a body of great importance, as it occupied a central position on the great road to Smolensko, in such a manner as to constitute the reserve at once of the Grand Army, Oudinot, and Schwartzenberg. Napoleon gave orders to him to advance to Smolensko, and intrusted the whole of Lithuania to his orders. Thirty thousand men stationed in that strong position, directly in the rear of the Grand Army, and on its line of communications, appeared to give great security to the enterprise of the Emperor. His instructions were,—"To direct all his attention and forces to the general object, which is to secure the communication from Wilna, by Minsk and Smolensko, with the Imperial headquarters. The army which you command is the reserve of the Grand Army; if the route by Smolensko to the Grand Army is interrupted, you must re-open it at all hazards. Possibly I may not find peace where I am about to seek it; but, even in that case, supported by so strong a reserve, well posted, my retreat would be secure, and need not be precipitate."[1]

Advance of Victor to Smolensko.

[1] Napoleon to Victor, Aug. 9, 1812. Fain. i. 425, 427.

The advance of Victor to Smolensko left a void between the Niemen and the Vistula which it was essential to fill up; and here, too, the provident care of the Emperor had arranged what seemed the means

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

of absolute security. Augereau's great army, above fifty thousand strong, received orders to move on from the line of the Elbe and the Oder, where it lay, to the Niemen, and occupy all the principal points of communication from Berlin to the Lithuanian provinces; while the hundred cohorts of the National Guard of France, which had been put on a respectable footing before the Emperor's departure from Paris, were moved forward from the fortresses of the Rhine, where they had been completing their discipline and organization, to the strongholds on the Elbe. Instructions were at the same time sent to Schwartzenberg, who was reinforced by some Polish regiments, to advance against Tormasoff, and secure the rear of the Grand Army from insult or injury from that quarter. Finally, to provide a reserve in France itself, and complete the great chain of communication from the Seine to the Moskwa, the Emperor ordered the levy by conscription of one hundred and twenty thousand men, from the youth who attained the age of eighteen to nineteen, in 1813. Thus, the whole of western Europe was to be precipitated on the devoted realm of Russia; and the vast army of five hundred thousand, which the Emperor commanded in person, was but the advanced part of the mighty host which was to drive back to Asia the Tartar race.[1]

And of Augereau from the Oder, and the National Guard of France to the Elbe.

[1] Fain. i. 428, 429.

Encouraged by these successes, and having completed those dispositions which appeared to secure his rear, Napoleon left Smolensko with his guards, and followed the Russian army, which was slowly retiring on the Moscow road. Barclay fell back by Dorogobouge to Wiazma, and from thence to Gjatsk, where Milaradowitch, with a reserve of sixteen thousand men, joined the army. He was surveying the ground with

Advance of Napoleon towards Moscow. Aug. 22.

a view to the choice of a field of battle, when he was superseded in the command by General Kutusoff, whom the Emperor had named commander-in-chief of all the armies. The wisdom of nominating to the supreme command a Russian by birth, endeared to the soldiers by his recent victories over the Turks, and who might direct the movements of the scattered forces from the Danube to the Baltic, cannot be doubted; but though Barclay was thus deprived of the fruit of his measures at the very moment when he might have expected to reap them, yet he gained immortal honour by the campaign which he had previously conducted. He had retreated above four hundred miles, in presence of an army twice as numerous as his own, headed by a general unrivalled for his talent in pursuing an enemy, without a single battalion having been broken, a single standard taken, or sustaining a greater loss in prisoners or artillery than he had inflicted on his pursuers. Scotland has good reason to be proud of having given birth to a leader capable of such achievements. History can furnish no parallel to a retreat of such peril performed with such success.[1]*

[1] Segur, i. 358. Bout. i. 290, 296.

Appointment of Kutusoff to the supreme command.

Kutusoff, who was thus in her last agony called by the unanimous voice of Russia to the command of her armies, was at St Petersburg when the eventful change befell him. He had been engaged, as we have already seen, in a campaign in which signal reverses had been succeeded by glorious triumphs on the Danube; and, beyond any other general in the Russian army, he enjoyed

* Barclay de Tolly was of an old and respectable Scotch family, the Barclays of Towy in Aberdeenshire. The old family tower of the chief who baffled the great invasion of Napoleon, is to be seen close to the highway, on the left hand side, between Fyvie and Turriff, on the great road from Aberdeen to Inverness.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

the confidence of the soldiers. Accustomed, in the great majority of instances, to be commanded by foreign officers, they beheld with unbounded enthusiasm a native Russian at the head of their battalions, and were confirmed in this attachment by the brilliant successes with which he had redeemed the campaign on the Danube, and restored to the Muscovite standards the triumphs of Ismael and Oczakoff.* Though victories so brilliant, however, had lately attended his arms, and a solemn Te Deum had been chanted at St Petersburg, in presence of the Emperor and court, on account of the peace with the Turks, Kutusoff himself laboured under a sort of disgrace at court, in consequence of its having been supposed that he had not conducted the negotiations at Bucharest with the expedition which the critical state of the empire required. The courtiers, observant of the least cloud which overshadows the fortunes of a leading character, were already shunning his society; and so low had the prospects of the future saviour of Russia fallen, that he received with tears of gratitude the visit of Count Oginski, a Polish nobleman, who had formerly enjoyed his intimacy in Lithuania, and had moral courage enough not to desert him in his adversity. Alexander was most unwilling, and justly so, to deprive Barclay of the command, as he with reason regarded his retreat from the Niemen to the Moskwa as a model of military skill, and destined, perhaps, in the end to prove the salvation of the empire. But the public mind was now agitated to the greatest degree by the fall of Smolensko, and the continued retreat of the Russian armies towards Moscow; the ferment at St Petersburg was extreme, and all classes concurred in demanding, with loud

* *Ante*, viii. 584, 604.

cries, the appointment of Kutusoff, as the only guarantee for the integrity of the empire. Alexander yielded to the torrent, and the veteran general was appointed to the supreme command. The universal transports of all classes, nobles, army, and people, upon this appointment, proved how much he had endeared himself to the nation: the people threw themselves at his feet when he went to the cathedral in state, to offer up his supplications for the success of the armies, and besought him to save Russia. Loaded with their benedictions, accompanied by their prayers, he set out for the army, charged with the salvation of his country and the deliverance of Europe.[1]

1812. Aug. 12.

[1] Oginski's Memoirs, iii. 186, 187. Bout. i. 302, 303. De Staël, Dix Années d'Exil, 348.

The whole life of the veteran who was now called to the momentous duty of directing the armies under the walls of Moscow, and whose brief career was attended with such extraordinary results upon the fortunes of Europe, had been devoted to the service of his counry. He was upwards of seventy when he was summoned to measure swords with Napoleon; but the snows of age had given him the caution of experience without extinguishing the fires of youth. He was descended from a noble Russian ancestry, and connected by marriage with the principal families of Moscow. His military renown had suffered less than might have been expected from the reverse of Austerlitz, as it was well known that the fatal cross march which brought on the disasters of that unhappy day,* had been undertaken contrary to his advice; and his recent successes in the war against the Turks had completely re-established his reputation. He had been repeatedly wounded in his different campaigns, and one of his injuries had deprived him of an eye.

His character and previous achievements.

* *Ante*, v. 476.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

His height was moderate, his figure corpulent, and his manners distinguished by good humour and *bonhommie;* but under this apparently simple exterior he concealed a remarkable degree of *finesse* and diplomatic address peculiar to his country, and which in the end proved more than a match for all the ministers of Napoleon. He had studied war profoundly, not only in the field but in the closet, and had brought an extensive theoretic acquaintance with military principles to bear on the experience which a long and active life in harness had given of its actual details. The soldiers were warmly attached to him, from the conviction acquired by experience, that without relaxing in the necessary rigour of discipline and subordination, he was at all times careful not to overload them with needless exactions, and ever solicitous about their material comforts; while the recent and glorious victories which he had gained over the Turks, inspired them with a confidence which no general had enjoyed since the days of Suwarrow. The companion in arms of that illustrious warrior, he was like him attached to old customs, and ingrafted the affection of the soldiers on national manners, a custom somewhat antiquated, and a scrupulous regard for the observances of religion, the great lever by which the public mind in Russia is to be affected. These qualities, from a knowledge of their influence on the soldiers, recommended him also to the higher and more enlightened classes, and compensated in general estimation the disadvantage of the advanced age of seventy-four years, and the recollection of the fatal reverse, which, under his command, the Russian arms had experienced at Austerlitz;[1] and it may safely be affirmed, that never did commander undertake a hazardous

[1] Chamb. ii. 27, 28. But. i. 302. Valentin, Guerre des Turcs, p. 174.

and difficult duty more warmly supported by all classes of his countrymen. CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

The arrival of Kutusoff diffused general joy amongst the Russian troops. The successful termination of the Turkish war was considered as a presage of victory by the nation. His engaging manners and paternal solicitude for their welfare, had long endeared him to the soldiers; confidence speedily succeeded to depression, and the troops began to burnish their arms and sharpen their flints in expectation of an immediate engagement. But it was no easy matter to justify these expectations. The army was now hardly fifty leagues from Moscow, and that capital could only be saved by a general battle; yet how engage in one with any prospect of success, with an army still (notwithstanding the arrival of sixteen thousand new levies and ten thousand of the militia of Moscow) greatly inferior in number to their opponents, and grievously depressed by the length of their retreat? Nevertheless, it had become indispensable to run such a hazard, in order to check the consternation which, since the fall of Smolensko, was beginning to spread in the interior of Russia; and Kutusoff readily embraced the views of Barclay as to the necessity of no longer delaying the perilous alternative.[1]

Arrival of Kutusoff at the head-quarters of the army.

Aug. 29.

[1] Bout. i. 303, 305. Chamb. ii. 28, 29.

During their march from Smolensko, the French army experienced great difficulties, which could only have been overcome by the experience and resources of their chiefs. The Russians retiring burned the principal towns, and the inhabitants of the country voluntarily left their houses to avoid the tempest which was lowering in their rear. With such skill was the retreat conducted, that neither cannon, equipage, nor prisoners fell into the hands of the

Extraordinary skill and order of the Russian retreat.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

invaders; and on one occasion, when the rearguard was attacked by Murat, the French, after an obstinate conflict, were repulsed from the field. Davoust, in a report to the Emperor upon the retreat of the Russians, observed, "It must be confessed that their retreat is conducted in admirable order. The nature of the ground determines the position of their rearguard, and not the manœuvres of Murat. Their positions are so well chosen, and defended with such vigour, that it seems as if their movements are the result of a plan previously determined on, and executed with scrupulous exactness."[1]

[1] Bout. i. 287. Segur, i. 318, 334. Jom. iv. 111. Chamb. ii. 23.

Order of the French pursuit.

Murat, at the head of a long column of twenty thousand cavalry, headed the pursuit; but it was in vain that the squadrons toiled through clouds of dust, from morning till night, under a burning sun; the horses sunk under their fatigues without being able to reach the enemy. After this enormous body of horse came the infantry, marching in three great columns, all abreast; that in the centre kept to the high-road, and was composed of the corps of Davoust, still the first both in numbers and discipline; on the right, within the fields, marched the corps of Poniatowski; on the left that of Eugene; the Imperial guard on the highway behind Davoust, and Ney in the rear. The artillery of these corps found their way as they best could, along the country roads or open plains parallel to the great road. The enormous body advanced with astonishing rapidity, without any regard to difficulties or the means of subsistence: the weak, the sickly, broken carriages, dismounted guns, lame horses, were left behind; but the head of the column still pressed on with ceaseless march, devastating the plain in its progress,[1] and trampling under foot the whole fruits

[1] Chamb. ii. 26, 27.

1812.

of the earth, as if a gigantic rolling stone had been drawn along its surface.

Description of the country through which the French army passed in advancing to Moscow.

The physical character of the country through which the army marched during its advance from Smolensko, had singularly facilitated this remarkable mode of sweeping, like a devastating flood, over a comparatively narrow space; but at the same time, it had impressed the most sombre and gloomy presentiments on the minds of the soldiers. Its great rivers are the only striking features of that boundless plain; every thing else is lost in the immensity of space. Hardly any brooks are to be met with, so frequently does the sand obstruct their course or drain away their waters. No variety of trees is to be seen; the eternal birch alone, planted in rows along the roadsides, relieves the monotony of nature. Even the absence of stones is felt as a subject of regret, so much is the mind fatigued by never perceiving new objects, or being permitted to repose on hills, rocks, or valleys. You see nothing on either hand but vast plains of corn, which appear to have been cultivated by invisible hands, so rare does the population appear in the boundless expanse around. A few woods of birch, villages separated by vast distances from each other, all formed of wooden houses constructed in the same manner, constitute the only objects which relieve the general uniformity of the scene. Even the approach to towns is indicated by no symptoms of greater animation; fruits and flowers are to be seen only in a few enclosures; orchards or vineyards are nowhere to be met with. Such is the vast expanse of Russia that every thing is lost in it; even the chateaux of the nobility and the cottages of the people disappear. You would suppose that you were traversing a country, of which

CHAP. LXVI.

1812.

the inhabitants had migrated to some other quarter of the globe. Even birds are awanting; animals are rarely to be met with; the unbroken extent has banished every other object except the extent itself, which incessantly haunts the imagination.[1]

[1] De Staël Dix Années d'Exil, 248, 250.

The Russians take post at Borodino. Description of their position there.

Napoleon, perceiving from the approach to Moscow that a general battle was at hand, gave three days' rest to his army, ordered a general muster-roll to be called of his troops along the whole line, and warned his detachments that if they did not join their respective corps, they would lose the honour of the approaching conflict. Orders were at the same time dispatched to the parks of reserve ammunition to advance, to the artillery to have their pieces in the best order, to the cavalry to refresh their horses, and to the soldiers to sharpen their sabres and examine the locks of their muskets. Meanwhile, the Russians took post at BORODINO, which appeared to Kutusoff to present an eligible position for defence. The little stream of the Kolotza, flowing in a rocky dell, covered the right of the line as far as the village of Borodino, which stood in the centre of the position, on an elevated ridge. On the left the army extended to the village of Semenowskoie, and the approach to it, though of easier access, was intersected by broken ravines, which promised to embarrass the movements of the enemy. To aid the advantages of nature, intrenchments were hastily thrown up by the Russian army on some parts of their line; a wood on the right was strengthened by some field-works; and in the centre, on the sloping banks of the Kolotza, two heavy batteries were placed; while between the centre and the left, where the position was most accessible, a great redoubt was erected on a height which commanded the whole

Sept. 2.

plain in front of the army. On the extreme left three other batteries were placed, to aid by their cross fire the great redoubt; while, at the distance of nine hundred toises in front of the line, another redoubt was erected on an eminence, to retard the advance of the attacking host.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 30, 31. Bout. i. 307, 308. Segur, i. 360, 365. Fain. i. 447, ii. 4, 5.

On the 5th September the French army, in three great columns, passed the vast and gloomy convent of Kolotskoi without meeting an enemy; but as it approached the destined field, clouds of Cossacks were seen traversing the plain, and behind them the Russian army, in a dense and imposing mass, was descried drawn up in battle array. At this sight the advanced guard halted, and Napoleon instantly coming forward to an eminence in the front, surveyed the position with the eye of a conqueror, and fixed, with the rapidity of lightning, on the points of attack.[2]

Napoleon's arrival on the field of battle.

[2] Segur, i. 364. Fain. ii. 2, 3.

The first object was to seize the redoubt in front of the position, where Prince Gorczakoff commanded ten thousand men, supported by twelve pieces of heavy artillery. The attack was conducted by Murat, with an immense body of cavalry, the division of Campans, and the corps of Prince Poniatowski. With an intrepid step the French infantry arrived to within twenty yards of the redoubt: the cannon on either side vomited forth grape-shot on their opponents, and the dauntless antagonists stood at that short distance discharging musketry at each other. At length, after a frightful struggle, the redoubt was carried by an assault of the 57th French infantry; but the Russians, returning to the charge, destroyed the troops who had entered it, and it was three times taken and retaken in the course of the evening.[3] Finally, it remained before night in the

Attack on the redoubt in front. Sept. 5.

[3] Segur, i. 366, 367. Bout. i. 313, 314. Lab. 131. Fain. ii. 3, 4. Gourg. 104. Chamb. ii. 44.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

hands of the French. On the following morning, when the Emperor passed the 61st regiment, he asked the colonel where the third battalion was: "Sire," he replied, "it is in the redoubt:" and in truth the whole of that brave corps had perished in the intrenchments which it had conquered.

Napoleon receives the account of the battle of Salamanca.

During the course of the evening, intelligence was received at headquarters of the disastrous battle of Salamanca. Napoleon, though on the verge of fate himself, showed on this occasion no indulgence for the faults of his lieutenants, and bitterly inveighed against the rashness of Marmont, which had endangered all his successes in Spain. About the same time a portrait of the King of Rome was received from the Empress at Paris. At the sight of the much-loved image, the Emperor, who was tenderly attached to his son, melted into tears: the anxiety and danger of the moment were forgotten in the recollection of those he had left behind him. With his own hands he placed the picture on the outside of his tent, and called the officers and privates of his faithful guard to share in the emotion which it had awakened in his mind.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 384, 385. Fain. i. 7, 8, 18.

Night previous to the battle.

When the musketry ceased, both armies took up their positions, and the fires of the bivouacs were lighted. Those of the Russians flamed in an immense semicircle, which illuminated the half of the heavens: those of the French were more scattered and unequal, as the troops successively arrived and took up their ground. Napoleon's tent was pitched on the left of the great road, amidst the squares of the Old Guard: but he slept little, being continually occupied in dispatching orders and asking questions. He could not be induced to lie down till he was assured by those on the outside, that,

from the number of the shadows of moving figures which surrounded their watchfires, it was evident that the enemy remained firm on the ground they had chosen. He passed almost all the night in dictating orders; and it was not till midnight was far past that he could be prevailed on to take a few hours of repose. A young officer of his guard never closed his eyes during that anxious night: Augustus Caulaincourt lay on the floor, wrapped in his cloak, with his eyes fixed on the miniature of his young bride, whom he had quitted a few days after their marriage, and whom he was never destined to see again in this world. His remains lie in the "red monument which his good sword hath dug" in the great redoubt on the field of Borodino.[1] The army passed, for the most part, a sleepless night; the common men being engaged in repairing their arms, the officers in protecting themselves from the cold, which already was severely felt at night, and in watching the Russian position to see whether a retreat was commencing. But no sound was heard along the whole line; their fires burned with a steady flame; and morning alone extinguished the light of their bivouacs.[2]

[1] Segur, i. 384, 385. Fain. i. 18, 19.

[2] Segur, i. 369, 370, 386. Lab. 132. Fain. i. 18, 19.

When the dawn discovered the Russian army still in their position, and it was evident that a general battle was to take place, an universal feeling of joy pervaded the French troops, and the anxiety of the men evinced itself in a general murmur throughout their lines. The fatigues of the campaign, the distance from home, the approaching dangers, were forgotten in the intense solicitude of the moment. The Emperor, at break of day, withdrew the curtains of his tent, and advancing into the middle of the circle of officers who awaited his approach, mounted

Napoleon's proclamation to his soldiers.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

on horseback, and riding to the heights in front, surveyed the whole of the Russian position: the weakness of the left made him resolve to make the principal effort at that point, and against the redoubt in the centre. At five, the sun breaking through a fog, appeared in cloudless splendour: "It is the sun of Austerlitz!" said Napoleon, and immediately the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, and the following proclamation was read to the troops:—"Soldiers! the battle is at hand which you have so long desired: henceforth the victory depends on yourselves. It has become necessary, and will give you abundance; good winter quarters, and a speedy return to your country! Conduct yourselves as you did at Austerlitz, Friedland, Witepsk, and Smolensko; and let the remotest posterity recount your actions on this day: let your countrymen say of you all—he was in that great battle under the walls of Moscow." The troops heard with enthusiasm these heart-stirring words, and their shouts were re-echoed from the Russian lines.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 323. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 28, 1812. Fain. ii. 18, 19.

Efforts of the Russians to animate the spirit of their troops.

Nor did the Russians neglect the most powerful means to animate the courage of their troops. On the evening of the 6th an unusual movement was observed in their position, and shortly a procession of dignified clergy, carrying an image to which miraculous powers were supposed to belong, passed through the whole lines of the army. The soldiers every where knelt before it, and mingled with the religious strains which rose from their ranks fervent prayers for their country, their families, and their religion. The priests bestowed their blessings on the prostrate army, and all, down to the meanest soldier, felt penetrated by the resolution to defend their country, or perish in the attempt.[2] Shortly

[2] Bout. i. 321. Fain. ii. 11. Segur, i. 384.

afterwards, preceded by a venerated image, and followed by all his staff, Kutusoff himself rode along the front of the line, immediately after which the following proclamation was read to the troops:—"Brother companions in arms! You see before you in that image, the object of your pious regard, an appeal addressed to Heaven to join its aid to that of men against the tyrant who disturbs the universe. Not content with destroying millions of human beings, the images of God, that arch rebel against all laws, human and divine, has penetrated with an armed force into our sanctuaries, defiled them with blood, overturned our altars, and exposed the arch of the Lord, consecrated in that holy image of our church, to the desolation of the elements, and the profanation of impious hands. Fear not, therefore, that the Almighty, who has called that reptile from the dust by his power, should not be with you. Fear not that he will refuse to extend his buckler over your ranks, and to combat his enemy with the sword of St Michael. It is in that belief that I set out to combat, to conquer, if needs be, to die—assured that my eyes shall behold victory. Soldiers! Perform your duties: think of your cities in flames; of your children who implore your protection: think of your Emperor, who considers you as the strength of his arm; and to-morrow, before the sun has set, you will have traced your fidelity and faith on the soil of your country with the blood of the aggressors."[1]

Proclamation of Kutusoff to his troops.

[1] Chamb. ii. 51, 52.

The sound of the prayers of the soldiers was heard in the French lines; and great was the ridicule bestowed in that unbelieving host on what they deemed the mummery of the exhibition. But the event proved that they are not the worst soldiers who are the best Christians: and

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

the experienced observer, who reflects on the vast variety and force of the temporal stimulants to exertion which were arrayed under the standards of Napoleon, will gratefully acknowledge the wisdom which led the Russian chiefs to invoke the aid of higher influences; and will discern in the principles of religion, how much soever disguised under the forms of uncivilized worship, the only power that can in the last resort withstand the shock of that concentration of worldly ambition which occasions, or is occasioned by, a revolution.

Forces engaged on both sides.

The forces on the two sides were nearly equal: but the French had a vast superiority in cavalry, and in the quality of part of their troops. The Russian force was a hundred and thirty-two thousand, with six hundred and forty pieces of artillery; but of these ten thousand were militia from Smolensko and Moscow, who had never seen service, and seven thousand Cossacks: so that for the shock of battle they could only count on a hundred and fifteen thousand.[1] The French force consisted of a hundred and thirty-three thousand, of whom thirty thousand were cavalry, and they brought into the field no less than five hundred and ninety pieces of cannon.[2] *

[1] Bout. i. 320.
[2] Segur, i. 328. Bout. i. 320. Jom. iv. 114. Gourg. i. 220. Chamb. ii. 33. Fain. ii. 21.

Davoust's plan of attack, which is rejected by Napoleon, who resolves to attack, by *echellon*, from the right.

Davoust proposed to the Emperor to move to the Russian extreme left, during the night, with forty thousand men; and when the battle was engaged along the whole front, to attack the redoubts suddenly in flank, and advancing rapidly from left to

* Great disputes have taken place as to the forces engaged in this memorable battle; but they are now ascertained in an authentic manner on both sides:—on that of the Russians by the official returns of Kutusoff published by Boutourlin; that of the French from the Imperial muster-roll called on the 2d September by orders of Napoleon, and published by Chambray from the Archives of the War-Office at Paris. —*See* BOUTOURLIN, i. 320, *and* CHAMBRAY, ii. 32, 33.

right of the whole Russian position, terminate the war on the field of battle. But Napoleon, deeming the detachment of so large a portion of his force hazardous at such a distance from his resources, rejected the advice. He resolved to attack by *echellon* from the right, and disposed his masses to act accordingly. Marshals Ney and Davoust led the attack, at the head of their respective corps.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 376, 377, 390. Jom. iv. 117.

While these vast preparations were going on in the French lines, the Russians on their part were making every thing ready to oppose to them the most vigorous resistance. The village of Borodino was occupied by a strong detachment of the Imperial guards, and may be considered as an advanced post in front of the line. The great road from Smolensko to Moscow ran perpendicularly through the centre of their position: on its right, Bagawouth and Ostermann occupied the plateau which bordered the Kolotza; the second next the road, the first on the extreme right. On the left of Ostermann, and on the left also of the road, the massy columns of Doctoroff extended as far as the great redoubt, with the defence of which his left was charged. Beyond the redoubt, Rajewskoi lay with his right resting on that bulwark, and his left on the village of Semenowskoie; while the corps of Borosdin and division of Newerofskoie, on an eminence, stretched beyond it to woods occupied by tirailleurs; beyond which, on the extreme left, Touczkoff had taken a position at the village of Ulitza, on the old road to Smolensko, with his own corps and the militia of Moscow, which were placed under his orders: the Imperial guard was in reserve behind the centre. All these corps were drawn up in two lines, with the exception of that of Touczkoff, on which, as he stood on the old road, a

Russian dispositions for the battle.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

furious attack was anticipated, and which was in four. The whole cavalry was drawn up in a third line in rear of the infantry, with the exception of one corps which was on the extreme right near the Moskwa; while the formidable artillery lined the whole front of the position.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 324, 327. Chamb. ii. 48, 49.

French preparations for the attack.

On the side of the French, the preparations for attack were on a corresponding scale of magnitude. On the extreme right, Poniatowski was placed on the old road to Smolensko, opposite to Touczkoff; next to him three divisions of Davoust, still, notwithstanding all their losses, thirty thousand strong, stood near the redoubt carried on the evening of the 5th: on his left, Ney's corps was stationed, with Junot's directly in his rear, between the redoubt and the stream of the Kolotza; the heavy cavalry of the reserve was behind the wood on one side of the captured redoubt, while the whole Imperial guard, also in reserve, was on the other. Morand and Gerard's divisions of Davoust's corps were placed on the left of Ney and Junot, under the orders of Eugene, whose corps, with the heavy cavalry of Grouchy, formed the extreme left of the line. Thus the great bulk of the French army was concentrated round the captured redoubt; within cannon-shot of whose batteries eighty thousand veterans and three hundred guns were accumulated; and it was easy to foresee that there the principal efforts of Napoleon were to be made.[2]

[2] Chamb. ii. 47, 48. Fain. ii. 17, 18.

Feelings of the soldiers on both sides.

Both armies passed a restless agitated night: so strongly had the intense anxiety of the moment come to operate on the excited frame of the soldiers. Never, in truth, in modern times, had interest so great, feelings so vehement, been brought into collision; never were such results dependent on the arm of the soldier. On the one hand was the flower of

the warriors of Europe, led by the consummate talents of Napoleon, which, after having subjugated all the states of the continent, had now penetrated beyond the old frontiers of Europe into the wilds of Asiatic rule: on the other, a nation originally sprung from the Tartar race, and but recently emerged into civilized society, singly maintained the strife against the mighty conqueror, and brought to bear against the accumulated forces of civilisation, the unsubdued energy of the desert. The destinies of Europe, every one felt, hung on the contest: the battle about to be fought was the most momentous which had occurred in modern times; on its result depended whether the liberty of nations was to be maintained, or one overwhelming power was to crush all lesser states within its grasp. Still more, the moral destiny of mankind was at stake: on one side was arrayed talent, energy, perseverance, the acquisitions of science, the glories of civilisation, the wonders of discipline; but the lustre of these brilliant qualities was tarnished by the purposes to which they were applied in the hands of the conqueror; they were employed only to gild the chains of despotism, and deck out the banners of infidelity: on the other were to be seen courage, resolution, devotion, the vigour of rising civilisation, the pride of unbroken conquest, the ambition of boundless dominion; but the harsher features of these aspiring feelings were concealed by the patriotic grandeur of the cause in which they were engaged, and the sanctity of religion threw a veil over the intermixture of worldly qualities by which its cause was to be maintained.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 52, 53.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 7th, a cannon fired from one of the batteries of General Sorbier, announced the commencement of the battle. The

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Battle of Borodino. Sept. 7.

French columns advanced in *echellon*, with the right under Davoust in front: their masses moved on steadily, without firing, under cover of their artillery, notwithstanding an incessant discharge of all arms from the Russian position. Davoust soon had a horse shot under him, and several generals were killed as they hurried over the plain, or toiled at the foot of the intrenchments: the ground was covered by moving masses, which incessantly rolled forward to the line of flame which marked the position of the hostile batteries. General Campans was severely wounded at the head of his division; Rapp, who succeeded him in the command, soon shared the same fate; Dessaix also was struck down, who succeeded Rapp; and Davoust himself, injured by a contusion received in the fall of his horse, was for a short time disabled. The successive loss of all their chiefs for some time threw indecision into the French attack; but at length the redoubts on the left were carried: they were immediately retaken, however, by the second line of the Russians, which Bagrathion brought up to the attack: the combat continued with the utmost fury; and Kutusoff, foreseeing that the left wing could not long withstand the repeated attacks which Napoleon directed against it, moved the corps of Bagawouth, from the right of the army, to its support.[1]

[1] Jom. iv. 122. Segur, i. 390. Bout. i. 327, 330. Fain. ii. 23, 26. Chamb. ii. 61, 62.

Partial success of Ney and Eugene in the centre.

While this fierce conflict was raging on the right centre under Davoust, Ney, impatient for the fight, was still inactive in the centre. He was so near the station of Napoleon, that the Emperor's aide-de-camp called the marshal to receive his last orders. At length the moment being arrived for him to support the left of Davoust, the orders to attack the redoubts were given: the drums beat, and Ney's three divi-

sions precipitated themselves to the charge, preceded by seventy pieces of cannon, and Murat prepared to aid them with ten thousand of his redoubtable cavalry. Soon the heads of the columns arrived in the awful tempest of grape-shot; but nothing could restrain their impetuosity. Gallantly facing the storm, they pushed on till they reached the foot of the intrenchments; and then, breaking off to the right and left, passed between them, and entered the redoubts by the gorge. Shortly after, however, Bagawouth's corps came up from the extreme Russian right, where it lay unengaged; and Bagrathion, putting himself at its head, not only expelled the enemy from their intrenchments, but pursued them for some distance into the plain. On the extreme right Poniatowski, in the first instance, carried Ulitza by a rapid charge, but he was soon after arrested by Touczkoff in the woody marshes which lay around that village, where the nature of the ground would only permit tirailleurs to be employed. Eugene, however, on the left, carried the village of Borodino, on the right bank of the Kolotza, and immediately crossing his divisions over the bridges of that stream, prepared to assail the great redoubt in the centre of the Russian line, where Barclay lay with the flower of the Russian infantry.[1]

[1] Fain. ii. 27, 28. Chamb. ii. 62, 65.

These contests, however, at this period were subordinate: it was in the right centre, where Davoust and Ney were striving for the heights of Semenowskoie, that the decisive blows were to be struck. These important heights soon became the principal objects of contention: both parties strove, by accumulating forces upon that important ridge, to gain possession of an eminence which promised to render them masters of the field. After four hours'

Ney and Davoust, after an obstinate conflict, carry the heights of Semenowskoie.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

hard fighting, Ney, finding himself overmatched by superior forces, anxiously demanded succour; and Napoleon, perceiving that these heights were still in the hands of the Russians, made preparations for a grand attack. The young guard, and great part of the cavalry in reserve, were sent to the support of Davoust: four hundred pieces of cannon were brought to bear upon the redoubts; while, under cover of this tremendous fire, immense columns of infantry and cavalry advanced to the assault. In vain the fire from the Russian batteries swept off whole battalions as they approached; the survivors closed their ranks, and advanced with a firm step and unbroken front against the rampart of death. Bagrathion, perceiving that the French were gradually gaining ground, ordered the whole left wing to issue from their intrenchments, leaving only the reserves to guard the works. The shock in the plain was terrible. Eighty thousand men, and seven hundred pieces of cannon, accumulated in a small space, strove with unparalleled fury for above an hour, without any perceptible advantage, till Bagrathion and the chief of his staff, St Priest, being both severely wounded, and Friant's division of Davoust's corps having assailed their flank, the Russians began to give way. General Konownitsyn, with admirable presence of mind, however, immediately assumed the command; and, drawing back his troops with their whole artillery from the disputed ridge, established them in a strong position in the rear, behind the ravine of Semenowskoie. The conquerors endeavoured to pursue their advantage, and the cavalry under Nansouty fell with the utmost fury upon the extreme left of the new Russian position; but all their efforts were defeated by the devotion of the regiments of the Russian guard,[1] who

[1] Bout. i. 338, 340. Segur, i. 398, 400. Chamb. ii. 65, 66. Fain. ii. 31, 34.

formed squares under a tremendous fire from their abandoned works, now lined by French cannon, and for the remainder of the day maintained their ground alike against the impetuous charges of the horse and the fatal ravages of the artillery.

The great redoubt is taken and retaken.

Meanwhile an obstinate conflict was going on in the centre, where Barclay, after having lost the village of Borodino, still resolutely defended the great redoubt. The Viceroy, after having crossed the Kolotza, advanced with the utmost intrepidity through the broken ground which lay in his front, overthrew the division of General Paskewitch, and, aided by General Bonami with his brave brigade, in the midst of the fire of eighty pieces of cannon, carried that formidable intrenchment. Kutusoff, sensible of the necessity of repairing the disaster, instantly brought forward his best troops, and, after an arduous conflict, not only retook the redoubt, and made Bonami and part of his troops prisoners, but, pursuing the broken battalions of the assailants, carried confusion and dismay into the French centre. Napoleon was anxiously solicited to support that point by the Imperial guard; but he deemed it imprudent to risk that last reserve at so great a distance from support. After much hesitation he refused the succour, and Eugene was left for two hours to support unaided the terrible fire of the great redoubt, and the repeated charges of the Russian cavalry.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 406, 407. Bout. i. 332. Chamb. ii. 67, 68.

Alarm on the left by an irruption of Russian cavalry.

The attention of the Emperor, however, was soon arrested by a violent outcry and confusion on the left. While Bagawouth and Ostermann were traversing the field of battle from the Russian right to their left, to aid in the defence of the heights of Semenowskoie, Kutusoff ordered Ouvaroff, with eight regiments of Cossacks, to cross the Kolotza, and cover the movement by an attack on the left flank of Eugene's

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

corps. This irruption was attended with the most signal success. A brigade of cavalry under Ornano was speedily overthrown; soon the Cossacks passed Borodino; Delzon's Italian division avoided destruction only by throwing themselves into squares; the Viceroy himself escaped being made prisoner only by throwing himself into one of the squares of infantry; the baggage and artillery drivers fled in confusion; and Napoleon himself deemed the attack so serious that he hastily galloped to the spot, accompanied by the cavalry and artillery of the guard. It turned out, however, to be a false alarm, as Ouvaroff, unsupported by infantry, retired across the Kolotza when he found himself threatened by large bodies of the enemy; but this diversion had an important effect, and, by withdrawing a portion of the reserve destined for the attack of the great redoubt, sensibly retarded the success of the day.[1]

[1] Fain. ii. 32, 33. Chamb. ii. 69, 70.

Grand successful attack on the great redoubt.

When the Russian intrenchments, however, on the left were carried, Napoleon resolved to make a desperate effort to regain his advantages in the centre. For this purpose more than two hundred pieces of cannon were directed against the great redoubt; and, while the Viceroy re-formed his divisions for the assault, Caulaincourt, in command of Monbrun's division of cuirassiers, which he had assumed as that General had just been struck down by a cannon-shot, was directed to penetrate through the Russian line, and, wheeling round, enter the intrenchment by its gorge. "You will see me, immediately, dead or alive," was the answer of the brave general; and he set off at the gallop at the head of his followers; and the glittering mass was soon lost in the volumes of smoke, as he approached the intrenchment. The Russians hastened, by all possible means, to support the point of attack: the corps of Ostermann was placed

in front, and the regiments of the guards, Preobazinski and Semenowskoie, were stationed as a reserve in their rear. Caulaincourt, advancing with the utmost rapidity, overthrew the regiments of Russian horse whom Kutusoff had opposed to him, while the great redoubt continued to vomit forth an incessant fire upon its assailants. Eugene with his infantry was advancing to the attack: the bayonets of his troops were already gleaming on its slopes, when the columns of the cuirassiers were seen ascending through the clouds of smoke which enveloped the intrenchment: its sides seemed clothed in glittering steel; and the fire from its summit, after redoubling in fury for a few seconds, suddenly ceased. The flames of the volcano were extinguished in blood; and the resplendent casques of the French cuirassiers appeared, when the smoke cleared away, above the highest embrasures of the intrenchment.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 408, 409. Lab. 144. Bout. i. 341. Chamb. ii. 71. Fain. ii. 34, 36.

The death of Caulaincourt, who met a glorious end at the entrance of the redoubt, did not prevent the French from establishing themselves in their important conquest. The Russian soldiers charged with its defence, refusing quarter, had almost all perished in the assault; and the interior presented a frightful assemblage of dismounted cannons, dying men, broken arms, and wounded horses. Grouchy, hoping to profit by the consternation which its capture had occasioned, advanced at the head of his cavalry against the corps of Ostermann, drawn up on the heights in the rear; but they were met by the chasseurs of the Russian guard, overthrown, and driven back with severe loss. Encouraged by this success, and perceiving that the French on the left of the great redoubt kept themselves at a distance to avoid the terrible fire of the Russian batteries on the heights in the rear, Kutusoff resolved to make a for-

Its capture leads to no decisive result.

Fresh advance of the Russian centre.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

ward movement, in order to re-occupy the ground on which his army originally stood in the centre at the commencement of the action. Ostermann's corps, with great part of the guard and a large body of cavalry, advanced on this perilous mission. Slowly and in admirable order the Russian masses moved forward under the fire of the redoubtable batteries which the French had established on the heights won from the Russians, and even reached the foot of the intrenchments, where eighty pieces of cannon thundered on their close ranks, with a severity of fire unexampled in war; while their cavalry, by several gallant charges, even carried some of the redoubts, and erected the Russian standards on their old strongholds. It was all in vain: they were speedily retaken, and the Muscovite battalions, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, toiled and died at the foot of the field-works which they had lost. Wearied at length with the fruitless butchery, Kutusoff drew off, covered by his immense artillery, and the Russians were again re-established along the whole line on the heights, immediately in rear of their original position.[1] Meanwhile, Milaradowitch planted the Russian batteries on the heights behind the redoubts; and from this second line the fire of artillery was so severe and incessant, that the French, far from advancing to the conquest, were obliged to shelter themselves on their knees, behind the intrenchments they had won. Poniatowski alone, desirous of emulating the successes of the centre, advanced in the evening against the corps of Bagawouth, which then occupied the great road to Smolensko, on the left of the Russian line, and after an obstinate struggle carried the position, from which his opponents retired to the heights occupied by Bagrathion's corps, at a short distance in the rear. Thus the Russians at all

[1] Chamb. ii. 71, 73. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 1812.

Final operations of the day.

points, at the close of the day, had lost their original line of defence. But, though driven from their first line, their columns, with an immense artillery, were ranged in unbroken ranks on a second position still stronger than the first; while the enemy, exhausted by an engagement of unparalleled severity, were in no condition to commence a second battle to complete their successes. The cannon continued to fire with the utmost violence on both sides till night, but no further operations of importance were attempted: the French, exhausted with fatigue and carnage, at length fell back to the ground they had occupied before the battle; and the Russians strengthened themselves in their new position behind the ravine of Semenowskoie.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 345, 347. Segur, i. 410, 411. Lab. 152. Fain. ii. 36, 37. Chamb. ii. 77, 78.

Such was the terrible battle of Borodino, the most murderous and obstinately disputed of which history has preserved a record. The wars of Timour or Attila may have witnessed a greater display of physical force, and been attended by a more prodigal waste of human life; but in no previous contest were such formidable masses of disciplined forces assembled, or so gigantic an array of the implements of destruction exhibited. The armies of the whole continent were here pitched against each other: not, as at Chalons or Tours, the fierce squadrons of invading barbarians against the tumultuary levies of feudal power; but the disciplined forces of civilized ambition against the steady firmness of regulated patriotism. The wealth of Europe was exhausted for the equipment of the expedition, its talent concentrated in the direction of its force: the whole resources of Russia were required to oppose it, its whole energy strained in resisting its fury.

Magnitude and importance of this battle.

The dreadful loss on both sides demonstrated the

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

unparalleled obstinacy of the contest. The Russians had to lament the loss of one of their bravest and ablest generals, Prince Bagrathion, who fell nobly as he defended the redoubts on the left, and subsequently died of his wounds; and of Generals Kaitaisoff and Touczkoff killed, and thirty generals of inferior rank wounded. Fifteen thousand killed, thirty thousand wounded, and two thousand prisoners, presented a total loss of nearly fifty thousand men. On the French side, besides Generals Monbrun, Caulaincourt, and many others killed, thirty generals were wounded; and the total loss was twelve thousand killed, and thirty-eight thousand wounded. The trophies of victory were equally divided; the Russians took ten pieces of cannon from their enemies, who could boast of thirteen captured from them.[1]

Loss on both sides.

[1] Bout. i. 349, 350. Segur, i. 414, 422. Larrey, iv. 46. Fain. ii. 41.

Napoleon has been severely censured by some writers for not bringing forward the Imperial guard towards the close of the action, in order to confirm the successes of the Viceroy and Ney. Certain it is that, in this battle, he was far from having exhibited the vigour or capacity which he had so frequently displayed on former occasions, and which had nowhere shone forth with brighter lustre than on the field of Wagram. His mental powers appear to have been, in a great degree, overwhelmed by the corporeal fatigue which he had recently undergone, and a painful malady which had, for the time, debilitated even his constitution of iron. A severe attack of rheumatism had deprived him of much of his former activity; and such was the state to which he was, in consequence, reduced, that at ten o'clock in the morning his strength required to be recruited by stimulating liquors. "He remained," says an unexceptionable eyewitness, General Mathieu Dumas, "during the

Want of vigour evinced by Napoleon in this battle.

engagement, on a position from whence he beheld the whole field of battle, immovable, seated on the edge of a ditch, or walking to and fro over a small space. It was not till half-past six that he mounted on horseback, and rode forward to the field, which was then strewed with dead."[1] The position thus chosen was so far from the theatre of action as to render correct observation with the eye impossible, and the communication of orders frequently tardy. At the most critical moments the Emperor evinced great irresolution. He appeared struck with apathy; and it may truly be said that he proved himself inferior, on this vital occasion, both to his previous reputation and his present fortunes.[2]

[1] Souvenirs de M. Dumas, iii. 438.

[2] Chamb. ii. 76, 77. Souv. de Dumas, iii. 438, 439.

Notwithstanding all this, however, it may reasonably be doubted whether, had Napoleon enjoyed in this great battle all his former vigour, sound policy would have dictated any other course than that which he actually pursued. The reasons which he himself assigned to General Dumas and Count Daru, the very night of the battle, for not aiming at more decisive results, appear perfectly satisfactory. —"People will perhaps be astonished that I have not brought forward my reserves to obtain greater success; but I felt the necessity of preserving them, to strike a decisive blow in the great battle which the enemy will probably give to us in the plains in front of Moscow. The success of the action in which we have been engaged was secured; but it was my duty to think of the general result of the campaign, and it was for that that I spared my reserves." Eight years afterwards he repeated the same opinion at St Helena. In truth, had the Guard been seriously injured at Borodino, it is doubtful if any part of the army, of which it was the heart, and

Sound reasons, nevertheless, which prevented him from engaging his reserves.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

of which, through every difficulty, it sustained the courage, would have repassed the Niemen. It is one thing to hazard a reserve in a situation where the loss it may sustain can easily be repaired; it is another, and a very different thing, to risk its existence in the centre of an enemy's country, at a distance from reinforcements, when its ruin may endanger the whole army. The fatal result to the French of the battle of Waterloo, demonstrates the extreme peril of engaging the reserves before the strength of the enemy's force has been finally broken; and the risk of a rout at Borodino was incomparably greater than on the French frontier. Though driven from their first line, the Russians still presented an undaunted front to the field of battle: they were masters of a strong position, defended by above six hundred pieces of cannon; and, notwithstanding their losses, nearly seventy thousand men were still under arms. The recent advantages had been too dearly purchased to admit the hope of decisive success; and, if the action was renewed on the following day, no other force remained either to ensure victory or avert disaster.[1]

[1] Dumas's Souvenirs, iii. 440. Gour. 244. Nap. in Month. ii. 94. Fain. ii. 38.

Reflections on the battle.

In truth, the battle of Borodino affords one example of a fact which was abundantly demonstrated during the remainder of the war, that when troops are naturally brave, and their courage has been improved by discipline, the superiority of generalship loses much of its importance. If large bodies of armed men lay down their arms the moment they are turned or cut off from their comrades, a skilful and vigorous attack is almost certain of success; but if they resist to the uttermost, and turn fiercely on their assailants, the peril is nearly as great to the assailing as the defending force.

The attacks in column of Napoleon, were frequently crowned with the most signal success against the Austrians and Prussians, but they seldom prevailed against the steady valour of the Russians, and never against the murderous fire of the English infantry.[1] [1] Jom. iv. 638.

Distressed condition of the French army at its termination.

The French army, sensible of the magnitude of their loss, passed a melancholy night after the battle. The marshals were divided as to the prudence of a further advance. The heroic Ney himself strenuously recommended a retreat. Such was the enormous accumulation of the wounded, that they far exceeded all the resources of the French surgeons, and they lay for days together neglected on the field. The little bread which remained was soon exhausted, and the wounded were compelled to live on horse-flesh. Even straw was awanting in the abbey of Kolotskoi and the neighbouring villages, which were converted into temporary hospitals, and the miserable wretches lay on the floor without either bedding or covering. During the night the Cossacks made an irruption into their lines, and the Imperial guard were obliged to stand to their arms: a humiliating circumstance after what was held out as a decisive victory.* On the following day, the Emperor visited the field; but the soldiers were too much depressed to receive him with their wonted enthusiasm: grouped in small bodies round their eagles, stained with blood, and scorched with powder, their shouts of triumph were feebly heard amidst the cries of the wounded. The field of battle, over its whole extent, was strewed with dead bodies, broken guns, casques, cuirasses, and helmets, among which the wounded raised their heads to implore relief. Bleeding

* "Un evénement," says Segur, "assez facheuse la veille d'une victoire."—Segur, i. 421.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

horses, maddened by pain, were alone seen moving in this scene of woe. The wounded had crept in great numbers into the ravines, to seek shelter from the storm of shot, or the severity of the tempest which succeeded it; their last breath uttered the names of their country, their mother, or their offspring.[1]

[1] Segur, i. 421. Larrey, iv. 57, 58. Chamb. ii. 82, 91.

Orderly retreat of the Russians towards Moscow.

The Russians retired the day after the battle, on the great road to Moscow. The magnitude of their loss rendered it too hazardous to risk the remainder of the army in a general action with the French, who had been considerably reinforced since the battle. But no signs of confusion appeared on their track; neither chariots, cannon, nor prisoners, attested the retreat of a broken army. A severe engagement in front of Mojaisk with the rearguard, terminated, without any decisive advantage, in the loss of two thousand men to each side, and sufficiently taught the French that neither the courage nor discipline of their opponents had suffered any abatement. The good countenance preserved by this gallant rearguard on this occasion, was of essential service to the Russian army; it enabled Kutusoff to retain Mojaisk till not only his whole artillery and chariots, but almost all the wounded were removed, before the town was evacuated on the following morning at ten o'clock. With such skill was the subsequent retreat conducted, that when the French arrived at the separation of the roads of Moscow and Kaluga, they were for some time uncertain, as at Witepsk, which of the two the retreating army had followed.[2]

Sept. 8.

[2] Segur, i. 423, 428. Bout. i. 352, 356. Chamb. ii. 87, 88, 97.

No further engagement of consequence took place. Napoleon, on the same day on which it was abandoned by the Russians, entered Mojaisk, and established his headquarters in that town, while his guard bivouacked round it, and the other corps

of the army slowly followed the enemy towards the capital. The retreat was conducted in so leisurely a manner, and the pursuit was so slack, that the army was considerably re-established in its equipments and organization after the desperate shock it had received before it approached Moscow; and on the 13th a position was taken up half a league in advance of that city, where field-works had been commenced. Though Kutusoff at this period numbered only fifty thousand regular soldiers, with twenty thousand militia and Cossacks round his banners, yet they were animated with the best spirit, and unanimous in the desire to fight another battle for the defence of the capital. A council of war was held to deliberate on the question, whether they should adopt this bold resolution. Some were of opinion that the position they occupied was not tenable, and that they should retire to a central position between the northern and southern provinces; Beningsen and Doctoroff were clear for fighting where they stood, as they maintained the army still mustered ninety thousand men, and the loss of Moscow would spread consternation through the empire. Kutusoff and Barclay supported the proposal of a retreat, assigning as a reason that it was indispensable to preserve the army entire, and draw near to the expected reinforcements; and that the abandonment of the metropolis "*would lead the enemy into a snare, when his destruction would be inevitable.*" These prophetic words determined the assembly, and orders were immediately given for the troops to retire in the direction of Kolomna. On the morning of the 14th, the army continued its retreat, and in silent grief defiled through the streets of the sacred city.[1]*

Debate in the Russian council of war whether they should evacuate Moscow.

[1] Bout. i. 362, 363. Chamb. ii. 99, 100.

"Notwithstanding," said Kutusoff, "the valour which my army dis-

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Notwithstanding these plausible, and indeed invincible reasons for a retreat, according to the information which the Russian general possessed, nothing is more certain than that, if they had been aware of the real state of the French army, they would have stood firm, and that Napoleon, if he had hazarded a battle, would have been defeated, or driven, if he had declined it, to a disastrous retreat. Unknown to them, the French Emperor had advanced so inconsiderately, and with so little previous preparation, from Smolensko, that he was literally destitute of the means of fighting another battle. The bold front assumed by Murat and the advanced guard, alone concealed the real weakness of the Grand Army, and above all its scanty supply of ammunition. All his care for the supply of the army had been confined to providing for his base at Smolensko; from that point he had plunged into the heart of Russia, with no magazines and little provisions, except what the soldiers could

Total deficiency of supplies, if known to the Russians, would have forced the French to halt and retreat.

Reasons given in the council of war by Kutusoff for abandoning Moscow.

played at Borodino, I was obliged, as you know, to yield to numbers, and commence my retreat. Since that time, the enemy has received numerous reinforcements, and at present I have fewer chances of success than I had then; our dangers are increased by the proximity of Moscow, where I should lose half my army if it was necessary after a reverse to traverse the capital. On the other hand, if we retire without combating we must abandon it: a cruel sacrifice, it is true, but which does not draw after it the destruction of the empire. On the contrary, the enemy, far removed from his resources, possessing as his only communication the road from Smolensko to Moscow; on the eve of experiencing reverses on the Dwina, by the arrival of the armies of Moldavia and Finland, will find himself in the most critical situation. The army is in a bad position, and is inferior in numbers to the enemy: such were the losses which it experienced at Borodino, that entire brigades are now commanded by field-officers, and regiments by captains; the same precision in its movements, therefore, is not at present to be expected as heretofore. Every thing, therefore, conspires to prove that we should be beat if we fought a battle. The safety of the country depends on the preservation of the army: a victory would not rid us of the enemy, while a disaster so near Moscow would occasion its entire destruction."—See *Mémoire de Barclay de Tolly sur le Conseil des Officiers Supérieurs à Moscow*, given in CHAMBRAY, ii. 257, *et seq.*

collect on their line of march, already wasted by the systematic devastation of the retreating enemy. At Vienna, little more than a third of the way, the want of every thing had begun to be experienced; and from that time, as they advanced onwards towards Moscow, the necessities of the troops had gone on continually increasing. The houses, to the distance of several miles on both sides of the great road, were invariably burned, either by accident or design, when the leading columns passed through; and those which followed found the country a perfect desert. In the ruins of the dwellings, men, horses, and baggage-waggons were indiscriminately huddled together, after the manner of barbarians. The ammunition of the army was adequate only for a single battle; and that of Borodino, where ninety-one thousand cannon-shot had been discharged, had reduced the reserved stores so low, that there did not remain enough for a second general engagement.[1] Fain. ii. 47.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

A large convoy, it is true, had on the 7th September passed Smolensko; but it could not reach the army for a fortnight to come, and it was utterly impracticable for the troops to maintain themselves in front of Mojaisk till that supply arrived. The little bread and flour which the soldiers brought with them from Smolensko, had been long ago exhausted; the mills were all destroyed, and the grain removed; the soldiers subsisted on nothing but horse-flesh, and the few potatoes or vegetables which they could discover in the earth; medicines for the sick, bandages and beds for the wounded, were nowhere to be found. So universal was the distress, that General Mathieu Dumas, who held the high situation of adjutant-general to the army, has declared that he regarded the burning of Moscow as an advan-

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

tage, from the belief that it must force the Emperor to an immediate retreat. Had the Russians been aware of these disastrous circumstances, they would doubtless have held firm at Moscow, and Napoleon would have been driven to a retreat, even in sight of the prize which he so eagerly coveted. But they could not conceive that so experienced a commander would have precipitated himself three hundred miles into an enemy's country, without magazines or provisions, and ammunition only for a single battle: therefore they abandoned the capital; and to this ignorance of the real state of the French army, and consequent resolution to abandon their metropolis, the total overthrow of Napoleon which ensued, is, beyond all question, to be ascribed.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 36, 38, 78. Fain. ii. 47. Larrey, iv. 58, 62. Dumas's Souv. iii. 450.

Universal desertion of the city by the inhabitants.

Nothing could exceed the consternation of the inhabitants of Moscow at finding themselves thus abandoned by their defenders. They had previously been led to believe, from the reports published by the Russian Government, that the French had been defeated at Borodino, or at all events that their entry into Moscow was out of the question; and no preparations for leaving the city had been made by the inhabitants, though arrangements to that effect had been made by the governor, COUNT ROSTOPCHIN, whose name has acquired an immortal celebrity from the awful catastrophe which soon followed. Speedily, however, the inhabitants left the city: in that extremity they reverted at once to the nomadic life of their ancestors. In a few days, nearly three hundred thousand had departed. The troops entered the gates with dejected looks, shedding tears of despair; the streets, almost deserted by their inhabitants, mournfully re-echoed the sound of their tread:[2] it seemed as if Russia was attending the obsequies of her me-

[2] Bout. i. 363, 364. Chamb. ii. 88, 105. Dumas, Souv. iii. 444.

tropolis. Nothwithstanding the confusion of the people, however, the march of the soldiers was conducted in admirable order; and the army, abandoning the cradle of the empire, prepared in silence to revenge its fall. 1812.

Arrival of the French at Moscow.

At eleven o'clock on the 14th, the advanced guard of the French army, from an eminence on the road, descried the long wished-for minarets of MOSCOW. The domes of above two hundred churches, and the massy summits of a thousand palaces, glittered in the rays of the sun: the form of the cupolas gave an Oriental character to the scene; but, above all, the cross indicated the ascendency of the European religion.

Description of that city.

The scene which presented itself to the eye, resembled rather a province adorned with palaces, domes, woods, and buildings, than a single city. A boundless accumulation of houses, churches, public edifices, rivers, parks, and gardens, stretched out over swelling eminences and gentle vales as far as the eye could reach. The mixture of architectural decoration and pillared scenery, with the bright green of foliage, was peculiarly fascinating to European eyes. Every thing announced its Oriental character. Asia and Europe meet in that extraordinary city. It resembles Rome, not in the character of its edifices or architecture, but in the strange variety of styles which are to be met with, and which at once bespeak the Queen of half the globe. Many of its palaces are of wood, coloured green, yellow, or rose, and with the exterior ornamented with sculpture in Moorish or Arabesque taste. Nowhere does luxury and magnificence appear in a more imposing form, or are placed close beside poverty in a more humiliating aspect. The Kremlin, the ancient palace of the Czars of Muscovy, where they alternately defended

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

themselves against the Poles and Tartars, is surrounded by a high loopholed wall, flanked by towers, which resemble rather the minarets of a Turkish mosque than the summits of a European fortress. But, how Oriental soever the character of the scene may be, the number and magnificence of the domes and churches, with their gilded cupolas and splendid crosses, tell the beholder at every step that he is in the midst of the rule of the Christian faith.[1]*

[1] De Staël, Dix Années d'Exil, 281. Chamb. ii. 111. Lab. 183. Segur, ii. 34. Larrey, iv. 63.

Transports of the troops at the sight.

Struck by the magnificence of the spectacle, the leading squadrons halted, and exclaimed, "Moscow! Moscow!" and the cry, repeated from rank to rank, at length reached the Emperor's guard. The soldiers, breaking their array, rushed tumultuously forward; and Napoleon, hastening in the midst of them, gazed impatiently on the splendid scene. His first words were, "Behold at last that famous city!" the next, "It was full time!" Intoxicated with joy, the army descended from the heights. The fatigues and dangers of the campaign were forgotten in the triumph of the moment; and eternal glory was anticipated in the conquest which they were about to complete.[2]

[2] Segur, ii. 33, 34. Lab. 183.

The French enter it, and find it deserted.

Murat, at the head of the cavalry, speedily advanced to the gates, and concluded a truce with Milaradowitch for the evacuation of the capital. But the entry of the French troops speedily dispelled the illusions in which the army had indulged. Moscow was found to be deserted. Its long streets and splendid palaces resounded only with the clang of the invaders' march. Not a sound was to be heard in its vast circumference: the dwellings of three hundred thousand persons seemed as silent as the wil-

* The most graphic description of the interior of Moscow in the English language, is from the pen of the Marchioness of Londonderry, the brilliancy of which induces a feeling of regret that the noble authoress should not have recorded her observations in a more durable form than the pages of an ephemeral periodical.

derness. Napoleon in vain waited till evening for a deputation from the magistrates or the chief nobility. Not a human being came forward to deprecate his hostility; and the mournful truth could at length be no longer concealed, that Moscow, as if struck by enchantment, was bereft of its inhabitants. Wearied of fruitless delay, the Emperor at length advanced to the city, and entered the ancient palace of the Czars amidst no other concourse than that of his own soldiers.[1]

[1] Bout. i. 366, 367. Segur, ii. 36, 41. Lab. 196. Chamb. ii. 112, 117.

The Russians, however, in abandoning their capital, had resolved upon a sacrifice greater than the patriotism of the world had yet exhibited. The governor, Count Rostopchin, had already set the example of devotion by preparing the means of destruction for his country palace, which he had set fire to by applying the torch with his own hands to his nuptial bed; and to the gates of the palace he had affixed a writing with the following inscription:—"During eight years I have embellished this country house, and lived happily in it, in the bosom of my family. The inhabitants of this estate, to the number of seven thousand, quit at your approach, in order that it may not be sullied by your presence. Frenchmen, at Moscow I have abandoned to you my two houses, with their furniture, worth half a million of roubles; here you will find nothing but ashes."* The nobles, in a public assembly, determined to imitate the example of the Numantians, and destroy the city they could no longer defend. The authorities, when they retired, carried with them the fire-engines, and every thing capable of arresting a conflagration;[1] and combustibles were disposed in the

Preparations made by the Russians for burning the city.

[1] Bout. i. 370. Lab. 218. Chamb. ii. 119, 120.

* The author received this anecdote in 1814 from the lips of Count Rostopchin himself, at Paris.—*See also* CHAMBRAY, ii. 271. *Pièces Just.*

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

principal edifices to favour the progress of the flames. The persons intrusted with the duty of setting fire to the city, only awaited the retreat of their countrymen to commence the work of destruction.

First night of the French in Moscow.

The sight of the grotesque towers and venerable walls of the Kremlin first revived the Emperor's imagination, and rekindled those dreams of Oriental conquest, which from his earliest years had floated in his mind. His followers, dispersed over the vast extent of the city, gazed with astonishment on the sumptuous palaces of the nobles and the gilded domes of the churches. The mixture of architectural decoration and shady foliage, of Gothic magnificence and Eastern luxury, excited the admiration of the French soldiers, more susceptible than any other people of impressions of that description. Evening came on: with increasing wonder the French troops traversed the central parts of the city, recently so crowded with passengers; but not a living creature was to be seen to explain the universal desolation. It seemed like a city of the dead. Night approached; an unclouded moon illuminated those beautiful palaces—those vast hotels—those deserted streets: all was still—the silence of the tomb. The officers broke open the doors of some of the principal mansions in search of sleeping-quarters. They found every thing in perfect order; the bedrooms were fully furnished as if guests were expected; the drawing-rooms bore the marks of having been recently inhabited; even the work of the ladies was on the tables, the keys in the wardrobes; but still not an inmate was to be seen. By degrees a few of the lowest class of slaves emerged, pale and trembling, from the cellars, showed the way to the sleeping apartments,[1] and laid open every thing which these sumptuous mansions con-

[1] Dumas, Souv. iii. 444, 445. Segur, iii. 47. Lab. 184.

tained; but the only account they could give was that the whole inhabitants had fled, and that they alone were left in the deserted city.

But the terrible catastrophe soon commenced. On the night of the 13th a fire broke out in the Bourse, behind the Bazar, which soon consumed that noble edifice, and spread to a considerable part of the crowded streets in the vicinity. This, however, was but the prelude to more extended calamities. At midnight on the 15th, a bright light was seen to illuminate the northern and western parts of the city; and the sentinels on watch at the Kremlin soon discerned the splendid edifices in that quarter to be in flames. The wind changed repeatedly during the night; but to whatever quarter it veered the conflagration extended itself; fresh fires were every instant seen breaking out in all directions; and Moscow soon exhibited the spectacle of a sea of flame agitated by the wind. The soldiers, drowned in sleep or overcome by intoxication, were incapable of arresting its progress; and the burning fragments floating through the hot air began to fall on the roofs and courts of the Kremlin. The fury of an autumnal tempest added to the horrors of the scene; and it seemed as if the wrath of heaven had combined with the vengeance of man to consume the invaders in the city they had conquered.[1]

Commencement of the conflagration. Sept. 13.

[1] Lab. 209. Segur, ii. 48, 51. Dumas, Souv. iii. 447, 448. Chamb. ii. 119, 120. Larrey, iv. 72, 73.

But it was chiefly during the night of the 18th and 19th that the conflagration attained its greatest violence. At that time the whole city was wrapped in flames; and volumes of fire of various colours ascended to the heavens in many places, diffusing a prodigious light on all sides, and attended by an intolerable heat. These balloons of flame were accompanied in their ascent by a frightful hissing

Awful appearance during the following night.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

noise and loud explosions, the result of the vast stores of oil, tar, rosin, spirits, and other combustible materials, with which the greater part of the shops were filled. Large pieces of painted canvass, unrolled from the outside of the buildings by the violence of the heat, floated on fire in the atmosphere, and sent down on all sides a flaming shower, which spread the conflagration in quarters even the most removed from those where it originally commenced. The wind, naturally high, was raised, by the sudden rarefaction of the air, to a perfect hurricane. The howling of the tempest drowned even the roar of the conflagration; the whole heavens were filled with the whirl of the burning volumes of smoke, which rose on all sides, and made midnight as bright as day;* while even the bravest hearts, subdued by the sublimity of the scene, and the feeling of human impotence in the midst of such elemental strife, sunk and trembled in silence.[1]

[1] Larrey, iv. 73, 74. Dumas, Souv. iii. 449, 450.

Consternation and disorder in the city.

The return of day did not diminish the terrors of the conflagration. An immense crowd of hitherto unseen people, who had taken refuge in the cellars or vaults of the buildings, issued forth as the flames reached their dwellings: the streets were speedily filled with multitudes flying in every direction with the most precious articles of their furniture; while the French army, whose discipline this fatal event had entirely dissolved, assembled in drunken crowds, and loaded themselves with the spoils of the city. Never in modern times had such a scene been witnessed. The men were loaded with packages, charged with their most precious effects, which often took

* "At the distance of three quarters of a league from Moscow, I could, at midnight, read the despatches which the major-general of the army addressed to me."—DUMAS, *Souvenirs*, iii. 450.

fire as they were carried along, and which they were obliged to throw down to save themselves. The women had generally two or three children on their backs, and as many led by the hand, which, with trembling steps and piteous cries, sought their devious way through the labyrinth of flame. Many old men, unable to walk, were drawn on hurdles or wheelbarrows by their children and grandchildren, while their burnt beards and smoking garments showed with what difficulty they had been rescued from the flames: often the French soldiers, tormented by hunger and thirst, and loosened from all discipline by the horrors which surrounded them, not contented with the booty in the streets, rushed headlong into the burning edifices to ransack their cellars for the stores of wine and spirits which they contained, and beneath the ruins great numbers perished miserably, the victims of intemperance and the surrounding fire. Meanwhile, the flames, fanned by a tempestuous gale, advanced with frightful rapidity, devouring alike in their course the palaces of the great, the temples of religion, and the cottages of the poor.[1]

[1] Lab. 210, 211. Segur, ii. 49, 52. Chamb. ii. 121, 122. Larrey, iv. 75, 76.

The Emperor long clung to the Kremlin, in the hope that the cessation of the fire would enable him to retain his long wished-for conquest. But at length, on the 16th, the conflagration had spread in every direction: the horizon seemed a vast ocean of flame, and the cry arose that the Kremlin itself was on fire. He gave vent to his rage by commanding the massacre of the unfortunate men who had been intrusted with the duty of commencing the fire, and, yielding to the solicitations of his followers, abandoned the Kremlin. "The wind and the rush of the flames was so violent, that Berthier was almost

Napoleon at length leaves the Kremlin.

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

swept away by their fury; but the Emperor and his followers arrived in safety before night at the country palace of Petrowsky. General Mathieu Dumas and Count Daru, who were among the last that left the Kremlin, could scarcely bear the intense heat as they rode along the quay to follow the Emperor; and on leaving it, their horses were with difficulty brought to pass between two burning houses at the entrance of the street, which formed the sole issue that remained to them. Arrived at length at Petrowsky, they had leisure to contemplate the awful spectacle which was presented by the conflagration. Early on the following morning, Napoleon cast a melancholy look to the burning city, which now filled half the heavens with its flames, and exclaimed, after a long silence—"This sad event is the presage of a long train of disasters!"[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 55, 59. Gourg. 274. Dum. Souv. iii. 449, 450. Chamb. ii. 121. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 4, 1812.

For thirty-six hours the conflagration continued, and during that time above nine-tenths of the city was destroyed. The remainder, abandoned to pillage and deserted by its inhabitants, offered no resources for the army. Moscow had been conquered; but the victors had gained only a heap of ruins.[2]

[2] Bout. i. 370. Gourg. 276.

Horrors of Moscow after the fire had ceased.

Imagination cannot conceive the horrors into which the remnant of the people who could not abandon their homes, were plunged by this unparalleled sacrifice. Bereft of every thing, they wandered amidst the ruins, eagerly searching for a parent or an infant amidst the smoking heaps: pillage became universal, and from the scene of devastation, the wrecks of former magnificence were ransacked alike by the licentious soldiery and the suffering multitude. The city, abandoned to pillage, was speedily filled with marauders; and, in addition to the whole French army, numbers flocked in from the country to share

in the general license. Furniture of the most precious description, splendid jewellery, Indian and Turkish stuffs, stores of wine and brandy, gold and silver plate, rich furs, gorgeous trappings of silk and satin, were spread about in promiscuous confusion, and became the prey of the least intoxicated among the multitude. A frightful tumult succeeded to the stillness which had reigned in the city when the troops first entered it. The cries of the pillaged inhabitants, the coarse imprecations of the soldiers, were mingled with the lamentations of those who had lost their parents, their children, their all, in the conflagration. Plunder became universal in those days of unrestrained license: the same place often beheld the general's uniform and the soldier's humble garments in search of pillage. The ground, in the parts which had been consumed, was covered with a motley group of soldiers, peasants, and marauders of all countries and aspects, who sought in the smoking ruins the remains of the precious articles which they formerly contained. The church of St Michael, containing the tombs of the Emperors of Russia, did not escape their sacrilegious violence; but no treasures were found to reward the cupidity of the depredators. The shouts of the marauders were interrupted by the shrieks of the victims of military license, and occasionally drowned in the roar of the conflagration;[1] while not the least extraordinary part of the clamour arose from the howling of the dogs, who, being chained to the gates of the palaces, were consumed in the flames with which they were surrounded.[1]

[1] Lab. 211, 215. Segur, ii. 67. Chamb. ii. 123, 126.

While these terrible scenes were passing in the metropolis, the Russian army retired on the road to Kolomna, and after falling back two marches in that direction, wheeled to the left, and by a semicircular

CHAP. LXVI. 1812.

Semicircular march of the Russian army round Moscow.

march regained the route to Kaluga, in the neighbourhood of the Smolensko road. By this masterly movement, Kutusoff at once drew near to his reinforcements, covered the richest provinces of the empire, secured the supplies of the army, and threatened the communications of the enemy. The city of Kaluga, stored with ample magazines, served as the base of the future operations of the army. The camp at Tarutino, where he took post, was speedily filled with provisions, and the multitude of recruits who daily arrived from the southern provinces, restored the spirits of the soldiers. Placed on the central route between Moscow and Kaluga, this position enabled the Russians to defend all the avenues to that important city, and the event soon showed of what consequence the admirable selection of this station was to the future success of the campaign.[1]

[1] Jom. iv. 152. Bout. i. 375, 384.

Feelings of the soldiers in the Russian army on this occasion.

In making this circular march, the troops were filled with the most melancholy feelings. The fugitives from the metropolis had already spread the intelligence of the fire; and the lurid light which filled one-half of the heavens, attested too plainly the truth of their tale. The roar of the flames, and the fury of the tempest, occasioned by the extraordinary heat of so large a portion of the atmosphere, was heard even at so great a distance; and as the troops marched at night, their steps were guided by the glare of the conflagration. One only feeling pervaded every breast, that of profound and ineffaceable indignation; one only passion animated every bosom, that of stern and collected vengeance. The burning of the holy city had effaced all lighter feelings, and impressed a religious solemnity on that memorable march. Words there were none spoken in that vast

array; the hearts of all were too big for utterance; the tread of the men alone was heard from the ranks; but the silent tears which trickled down the cheek, and the glance of fire which was turned towards the heavens, bespoke the deep determination that was felt. Silent and mournful they continued their way, interrupted only by the burning fragments which occasionally fell among their ranks, and for a moment illuminated the stern visages of the soldiers. They left behind them their palaces and their temples; monuments of art and miracles of luxury; the remains of ages which had passed away, and of those which were yet unfinished; the tombs of their ancestors and the cradles of their descendants: nothing remained of Moscow but the remembrance of the city and the resolution to avenge it.[1]*

[1] Guil. de Vaud, i. 209. Segur. ii. 72.

Karamsin.

CHAPTER LXVII.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

ARGUMENT.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

General Inclination of Conquest from the North to the South—Final Cause of this Law of Nature—Arrival of the Era in the French Wars, when the North rolled back Conquest to the South—Moral Renovation of Europe which sprung from these Events—Calamitous Situation of Russia at this period, and heroic Courage of the Emperor and Kutusoff—Heroic Sentiments of the Emperor in private—Plan of the Russian General for surrounding the French—Extraordinary Magnitude of these Combinations—Measures of Napoleon at this time to secure his Communications—His unsuccessful Attempt at a Negotiation—Kutusoff's Opinion at this period on the advantages of the Russian Position—Napoleon in vain expects Submission from the Court of St Petersburg—His Reasons for a protracted Stay at Moscow—Continued fineness of the Weather there—Ruin of the Discipline of the French Army—Increasing Strength and Admirable Situation of the Russian Host—Feelings and Aspect of the Recruits who crowded to the Russian Standards—Kutusoff's clear Views of the Advantages of his Situation—Ruinous Partisan Warfare which went on, on the flanks and rear of the French—Disastrous Effect of the Plunder of Moscow on the French Army—Increasing Danger thence arising to the French Position—Napoleon's early Preparations for a Retreat—Extreme Difficulty of keeping open the Communication in his rear—Alexander's firm Resolution not to treat for Peace—First Appearance of Snow, and increasing Disquiet of the French Soldiers—Napoleon makes Preparations for a Retreat—Kutusoff's Picture of the State of his Army at this Period—He resumes Offensive Operations—Successful Attack on Murat on the 18th October—Napoleon marches towards Kaluga—Force which left Moscow—Strange Caravans which followed the Army—Advance of Napoleon to Maloi-Jaroslawitz, and desperate Battle there—Results of the Battle—Napoleon's grievous Embarrassment at the Result—He narrowly Escapes being made Prisoner—Deliberations at the French Headquarters on the course to be pursued—Dreadful appearance of the Field of Battle—A Retreat is resolved on—Kutusoff moves towards Kaluga to bar his Passage in that Direction—Dejection which ensued among the Troops—Views of Napoleon in commencing the Retreat—Kutusoff moves in Pursuit on a Parallel Line—Woeful Spectacle exhibited on passing the Abbey of Kolotskoi—Severe Action at Wiazma—Results of the Battle, and Failure of Kutusoff to push his advantage to the utmost—Ney assumes the Command of the Rearguard—Commencement of the great Frosts, and Appearance of the Atmosphere—Dreadful Depression they

produced on the minds of the Soldiers—Increasing Distresses of the Troops—Effects of these Horrors on the minds of the Soldiers—Continuance of the Retreat to Dorogobouge—Disasters of the Viceroy in his Retreat to the same place—Movements of Kutusoff in his Parallel March at this Time—Napoleon receives Intelligence of Mallet's Conspiracy at Paris—Effort of Napoleon to provide Magazines along his Line of Retreat—Disastrous Intelligence from the Armies on both Flanks—Important Operations of Wittgenstein on the Dwina—Check of Count Steinhill, and continued Successes of Wittgenstein—Napoleon orders Victor and Oudinot to Attack Wittgenstein, which is done without Success—Operations of Tchichagoff on the other Flank—Operations of Schwartzenberg against Sacken—Capture of Minsk and the Bridge of Borissow by Tchichagoff—Partial Completion of the Plan for Surrounding Napoleon—Alarmed by these Disasters, Napoleon resolves to Retreat from Smolensko to the Niemen—Arrival of Kutusoff at Krasnoi—Order of the French Retreat from Smolensko, and Napoleon is allowed to pass with the Guard—Reasons which induced the Russian General to do this—Effect which the Name of Napoleon and the Grand Army still produced on men's minds—Successful Attack on Eugene's Corps—Arrangements for cutting off Davoust as he passed—Napoleon's heroic Resolution at all hazards to support him—Battle of Krasnoi—Imminent Danger and brave Conduct of Ney—General Results of the Battles of Krasnoi—Dreadful Confusion which prevailed in the French Army—Heroic Conduct of Ney during his Retreat—Prodigious Losses of the French Army—Cessation of the Frost, and Discontinuance of the Pursuit by Kutusoff—Napoleon's Hazardous Situation, and Plans at this Period—His Admirable Arrangements for Bursting through the Force which Tchichagoff had to oppose him—Breaking down of the Bridge of Borissow, and Junction of Victor and the Grand Army—Napoleon's Measures to Deceive the Enemy as to his Real Point of Crossing—The first part of the Army surprise the Passage—Tchichagoff's Movements on hearing of the Passage—Capture of Partonneaux's Division by Wittgenstein—Preparations for a General Attack on the French on both sides of the River—The French force their way through Tchichagoff's Corps—Furious Attack by Wittgenstein on the Troops remaining on the left bank of the River—Generous Devotion shown by many at this awful Passage—Its general Results—Dreadful Disorders which now ensued in the Army—Napoleon leaves it for Paris—Sufferings of Poland during the Campaign—Napoleon's Arrival at Warsaw—His Conversation with the Abbé de Pradt at Warsaw—His extraordinary Ideas—Increased severity of the Cold, and dreadful Sufferings of the Troops—Prodigious Losses of the Detachments which joined the Grand Army at this Period—Singular Difference between the Inhabitants of the South and the North of Europe in bearing the Cold—Retreat from Wilna to the Niemen—Passage of the Bridge of Kowno—Heroic Conduct of Ney on this Occasion—His Appearance at Gumbinnen to General Dumas—Terrible Contrast to the Passage of the River at the same point five months before—Operations against Macdonald near Riga—Schwartzenberg Evacuates the Russian Territory—Retreat of the Remains of the Grand Army to Konigsberg and Dantzic—Arrival and Generous Conduct of Alexander at Wilna—Noble Proclamation of the Emperor Alexander to his Soldiers—Losses of the French in the Campaign—And of the Russians—Reflections on the Military Causes of this prodigious overthrow—Great Ability of Napoleon generally in this Campaign—Heroic Constancy

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

of the Russians—The Severity of the Russian Winter will not explain the Disaster—The Cold was unusually long of setting in—And it affected the Russians as much as the French—Napoleon's long Stay at Moscow was not what ruined him—Burning of Moscow did not occasion his destruction—Real Causes, in a Military point of view, of the Disaster—Importance of the Asiatic Light Horse of Russia on the Campaign—Extraordinary Ability of Kutusoff's Conduct of the Pursuit—Grandeur of the Conduct of the Emperor and People of Russia—Moral Causes of Napoleon's Overthrow—The Necessity of Conquest to Existence—Reaction of the World against his Oppressive Mode of making War, and Government.

General inclination of conquest from the north to the south.

THE stream of conquest in every age has flowed from the north to the south. The superiority of arms, or the power of knowledge, have sometimes given the civilisation of refined, a temporary advantage over the courage of barbarous states; but all the great settlements of mankind have come from the northern regions. The fanaticism of Arabia, the discipline of Rome, for a time subdued the fairest regions of the globe; but the dynasties they established were of no permanent duration. The empire of the Caliphs hardly survived the immediate descendants of Omar; the crescent of Mahomet wavered till it was steadied by the conquests of Turkestan; the discipline of Rome more easily conquered the whole of Asia than a few semi-barbarous tribes in the north of Germany; and all the courage of the legions could not subdue the nations beyond the frontier of the Danube, or prevent the provinces of their dominion from at length becoming the prey of an artless but courageous northern enemy.

Final cause of this law of nature.

It is by the continued operation of this military superiority of the north over the south, that the purity of the moral atmosphere is preserved, and the progress of wealth rendered consistent with the preservation of virtue and energy among mankind. Civilisation, it is true, induces opulence, and opulence gives birth to corruption; but courage as certainly accompanies poverty, and courage in the

end ensures conquest. The accumulated wealth and decaying hardihood of civilisation, at once provoke hostility and disarm resistance; while the augmented numbers of turbulent barbarism both require expansion and compel obedience. The stream of conquest overwhelms for a time the monuments of civilisation, and buries the labours of useful industry; but the victors insensibly acquire knowledge from the people they have vanquished, and yield to the superiority of more advanced civilisation; while the conquered provinces are regenerated by the infusion of barbarian valour, and regain, amidst the hardships of life, the virtue they had lost by its refinements. Ages elapse during the mighty change, and generations seem doomed to misfortune during the winter of existence; but the laws of nature are incessantly operating, and preparing in silence the renovation of the world.

Arrival of the era in the French wars, when the north rolled back conquest to the south.

The era of Napoleon was not destined to form an exception to this general tendency. The enthusiasm which the French Revolution had occasioned, the talent it had developed, the military abilities of its chief, had rolled the tide of conquest backward to its source, and pushed far beyond the utmost limits of the Roman empire the dominion of southern civilisation: but the concurrence of these extraordinary events could not permanently alter the destinies of mankind. The flames of Moscow were the funeral pile of the French empire: from its ashes arose a spirit which could never be subdued. From that period commenced a succession of disasters which brought back the tide of conquest to the shores of the Rhine, and re-established the wonted ascendency of the northern over the southern regions. But the second invasion of the northern nations was not stained by

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

the barbarities which marked the first: the irruption of Attila was very different from that of Alexander. Other conquerors have preceded him in the path of military glory; other nations have bowed beneath the yoke of foreign dominion; and other ages have seen the energies of mankind wither before the march of victorious power. It has been reserved to our age alone to witness, it has been the high prerogative of Russia only to exhibit, a more animating spectacle: to show us power applied only to the purposes of beneficence, victory made the means of moral renovation, conquest become the instrument of political resurrection. After resisting the mightiest armament which the power of man had ever assembled against the liberties of mankind, we have seen her triumphant arms issue victorious from their desolated country, give liberty to those who had been compelled to attempt their subjugation, and seek to avenge the ashes of their own capital by sparing the cities of their prostrate enemy. Before the march of her victorious power, we have seen the energies of the world revive; we have seen her triumphant voice awaken every fallen people to nobler duties, and recall the remembrance of their pristine glory; we have seen her banners waving over the infant armies of every renovated people, and the track of her chariot wheels followed, not by the sighs of a captive, but the blessings of a liberated world.

Moral renovation of Europe which sprung from these events.

In this moral renovation of nature all ranks have been compelled to participate. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, have been alike found at the post of honour. The higher orders, by whose weakness and vice an inlet was opened for these misfortunes, have been purified in the misfortunes themselves; and in the school of adversity trained to

nobler employments, and called to the exercise of more animating duties. The lower orders, by whose cupidity and ambition they were subsequently occasioned, have learned wisdom and gained experience in the course of the same arduous struggle; and the misfortunes of states have given them a weight and an importance unknown in the former ages of the world. Even the sovereigns of Europe have felt the influence of the same causes: they have been compelled to leave the abodes of ease and of affluence, to join in the soldier's duties and partake of the soldier's glory: they have been compelled to justify the eminence of their rank by the display of all the qualities by which it is ennobled. All that is great and all that is noble in Europe, have been assembled in one memorable field: the prayers of emperors have ascended to Heaven for the success of the soldier's arm; and the meeting of the sovereigns of Europe within the walls of Leipsic has realized all the magnificence of eastern imagination, and all the visions of chivalrous glory.

Calamitous situation of Russia at this period, and heroic courage of the Emperor and Kutusoff. Sept. 16.

But the dawn of the day which was fraught with these mighty events, and destined to set amidst this blaze of glory, was dark and gloomy to Russia. The necessity of abandoning the metropolis, the ruin of the ancient capital, spread dismay through the empire. On the 16th September, Kutusoff announced the melancholy event, adding, as the only matter for consolation, "that the city was bereft of the population, who constituted its strength: that the people are the soul of the empire; and that, where they are, there is Moscow and the empire of Russia." The Emperor displayed in these trying circumstances a heroism worthy of ancient Rome. His address to the nation, announcing the fall of Moscow,

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

concluded with these remarkable and prophetic words:—"Let there be no pusillanimous depression; let us swear to redouble our courage and perseverance. The enemy has entered Moscow deserted, as into a tomb, without the means either of ruling or subsistence. He invaded Russia at the head of three hundred thousand men; half have perished from the sword, famine, or desertion, the other half are shut up in the capital, bereft of every thing. He is in the centre of Russia, and not a Russian has yielded to his power. Meanwhile, our forces increase and surround him. He is in the midst of a warlike people, whose armies envelope him on every side; soon, to escape from famine, he will be compelled to cut his way through our brave battalions. Shall we then yield when Europe is in admiration at our exertions? Let us show ourselves worthy of giving her an example, and bless the Hand which has chosen us to be the first of nations in the cause of freedom. In the present miserable state of the human race, what glory awaits the nation, which, after having patiently endured all the evils of war, shall succeed by the force of courage and virtue, not only in reconquering its own rights, but in extending the blessings of freedom to other states, and even to those who have been made the unwilling instruments of attempting its subjugation! May the blessing of the Almighty enable us to return good for evil; by the aid of his succour may we be enabled to triumph over our enemies; and in saving ourselves may we become the instruments of his mercy for the salvation of mankind!"[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 133, 134. Segur, ii. 73, 74.

Nor did the private sentiments and conduct of the Emperor fall short of these magnanimous declarations. On the morning on which the intelligence of the battle of Borodino reached St Petersburg, he

sent for the English ambassador, Lord Cathcart. Without attempting to disguise that they had been overpowered in that bloody fight, and that the sacrifice of Moscow would be the consequence, he desired him to inform his Government, that not for one nor twenty such calamities would he abandon the contest in which he was engaged; and that, rather than submit, he would abandon Europe, and retire altogether to the original seats of his ancestors in the Asiatic wilds.*

Heroic sentiments of the Emperor in private.

The preparations of the Russian Government corresponded to the magnitude of these anticipations, and their firmness was worthy of the cause in which they were engaged. The peace with Turkey had rendered disposable the greater part of the Moldavian army; while the treaty with Sweden, concluded by the Emperor in August at Abo, enabled the regular forces of Finland to be withdrawn for the reinforcement of the corps of Count Wittgenstein. While the main Russian force, therefore, retired before Napoleon, and drew the war into the interior of Russia, two powerful armies were preparing to intercept his communications and cut off his retreat. The corps of Wittgenstein, augmented by the greater part of the troops of Finland, under Count Steinhill, and the militia of St Petersburg to the numerical force of fifty thousand men, received orders to act vigorously against St Cyr, and drive him from Polotsk, in order to approach the bank of the Oula and the line of retreat of the main French army. At the same time the army of Moldavia, under Tchichagoff, of an equal force, was directed to advance from the southern provinces, to pass the corps of Schwart-

Plan of the Russian general for surrounding the French.

* I received this striking anecdote from the lips of my venerable friend Earl Cathcart himself.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

zenberg, and establish itself on the line of the Beresina, and at the important bridge of Borissow. Thus, while Napoleon was resting in fancied security among the ruins of Moscow, and impatiently expecting the submission of Russia, a formidable force of a hundred thousand men was moving towards Poland, to cut off his retreat to western Europe. The empire was pierced to its heart, but instead of yielding up the contest it was extending its mighty arms to stifle the aggressor.[1]*

[1] Bout. ii. 128, 130. Chamb. ii. 191, 192, 289.

* The orders to this effect, from Alexander in person, which subsequently received Kutusoff's approbation, and were dispatched to Tormasoff, Tchichagoff, Wittgenstein, and Steinhill, are dated September 18, 1812, and are given in Boutourlin, ii. 241, and Chambray, ii. 289. The precision with which the directions were given, and the marches calculated, so as to secure the grand object of combining a hundred thousand men at Minsk, Borissow, and the line of the Beresina, from the 15th to the 20th of October, directly in the rear of the main line of communication and retreat of the French army, is worthy of unqualified admiration.—"Tchichagoff was ordered to be at Pinsk by the 2d October, and thence to march by Nieswig to Minsk, so as to reach the latter town by the 16th, and thence advance to the line of the Beresina, and fortify Borissow and all the points susceptible of defence on the line of the enemy's retreat; so that the army of Napoleon, closely followed on its retreat by Prince Kutusoff, should experience at every step a formidable resistance. He was in this position to cut off all communication, even by couriers, between the French army in the interior and the remainder of Europe, and await the progress of events. Tormasoff received instructions to commence offensive operations on the 8th of October against Schwartzenberg, with a view to drive his force from the environs of Nieswig and Pinsk, and leave the line of the Beresina clear for the occupation of Tchichagoff and Wittgenstein, who were to descend from the north at the same time in the same direction. Wittgenstein himself was to be reinforced by the 8th October by eleven thousand of the militia of St Petersburg, nine thousand old soldiers from Finland, and eight thousand of the militia of Novogorod; and, after having collected all his reinforcements, he was directed to commence offensive operations on both sides of the Dwina, and strive to expel the enemy from Polotsk, and overwhelm the corps of Oudinot, who was to be driven off in the direction of Wilna, so as to separate him from the French Grand Army. Having accomplished this success, Wittgenstein was to leave the care of looking after Oudinot's remains to Count Steinhill, who was placed further to the west, in the direction of Riga, and move himself with the utmost rapidity to Dokszitzy, where he was

CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

Extraordinary magnitude of these combinations.

History can furnish no parallel to the magnitude of their military combinations, or the sagacity with which they were conceived. Had subsequent events not rendered their complete execution impracticable, they unquestionably would have led to the surrender of the whole French army. From the forests of Finland to the steppes of the Ukraine, from the confines of the Frozen to those of the Torrid Zone, multitudes of armed men were directed to one centre; the days of their march were accurately calculated, and the point of their union previously fixed. The neighbourhood of Borissow and the 22d of October, were assigned as the place and time of their junction,—a place about to acquire a fatal celebrity in French history. It is not to be forgotten that the orders which assembled these distant masses were issued from St Petersburg, during the consternation which immediately followed the fall of Moscow, and when Napoleon confidently calculated on the immediate submission of the Russian Government.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 128, 244, 248.

In advancing to Moscow, the French Emperor, on his part, was not unmindful of his line of communication. The corps of Victor, thirty thousand strong,

to be by the 22d October, and open up a communication with Tchichagoff at Minsk. In that situation he was to wait the course of ulterior events, and meanwhile do his utmost to secure every pass by which the enemy might retire from Smolensko by Witepsk towards Wilna. Lastly, the corps of Count Steinhill, which had been drawn from Finland, was to approach Riga, upon which the governor of that fortress was to march out with about twenty thousand men, and co-operate with him in such a manner as to draw the whole attention of Macdonald, and prevent his sending succours to St Cyr or Oudinot; and in the event of those marshals being beaten by Wittgenstein, ordered to fall upon their remains." These movements, taken in conjunction with those of the Grand Army in the neighbourhood of Moscow, and directing the concentration of forces from the Danube to the Gulf of Finland, directly in the rear of the French army, are the greatest, and perhaps the most skilful military operations recorded in the annals of the world.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

had been, agreeably to the directions already given, stationed at Smolensko, with the double view of protecting the rear of the Grand Army, and aiding, in case of need, the forces of St Cyr on the Dwina; while the corps of Augereau, amounting to fifty-two thousand men, was stationed in *echellon*, through the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and the kingdom of Prussia. Schwartzenberg, at the head of the Austrians, was more than a match for Tormasoff; and St Cyr, with the corps of Oudinot and the Bavarians, was destined to keep in check the army of Wittgenstein. It is remarkable that the penetrating eye of the French Emperor, so early as the 26th of August, and of course prior to the battle of Borodino, discerned the probable importance of the country between Minsk, Smolensko, and Witepsk, in the ulterior operations which might be expected before the close of the campaign, and that he made, in consequence, every imaginable effort to strengthen his forces in that vital point of his communications. Victor received the command-in-chief of the forces in Lithuania: he was to establish his headquarters at Smolensko; and powerful reinforcements, especially of Polish and Lithuanian troops, were directed from all quarters to various points from that city by Borissow to Minsk. The great objects of this marshal were to be, keeping up on the one side a communication with Wilna, where a strong garrison and vast magazines were stationed, and on the other with the Grand Army in the interior of Russia.

Measures of Napoleon to secure his communications.

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, Aug. 26, 1812; and Berthier to Victor, Aug. 27. Fain. ii. 61, 63. Jom. iv. 111.

Napoleon returned to the Kremlin, which had escaped the flames, on the 20th September, and anxiously awaited the impression which the intelligence of his success should produce on the Russian Government. To aid the supposed effect, Count

His unsuccessful attempt at a negotiation.

Lauriston was dispatched to the headquarters of Kutusoff, with authority to propose an armistice; and Murat had an interview with General Beningsen. Prince Wolkousky was forwarded with the letter of Napoleon to Petersburg; while the French deputation were amused by hopes of accommodation held out by the Russian generals.[1]

Oct. 21, 1812. [1] Bout. ii. 134, 136. Segur, ii. 86. Chamb. ii. 304.

Meanwhile, Napoleon lay inactive at Moscow, expecting the submission of the Russian Government. But day after day, and week after week, rolled on without any answer to his proposals: the winter was visibly approaching, and the anxiety of the troops in regard to their future destination could not be concealed. His first proposal was to burn the remains of Moscow, march by Twer to St Petersburg, and then form a junction with Macdonald, who was still in the neighbourhood of Riga. But the difficulty of advancing with an army encumbered with baggage and artillery on a single chaussée, traversing morasses and forests at the commencement of the winter season, was too obvious to his generals, and speedily led to the abandonment of the design. He risked the existence of his army, therefore, by a continued residence at the Kremlin, and allowed the precious hours, which could never be recalled, to pass away, without taking any steps towards securing permanent quarters for the winter.[2]

Napoleon in vain expects submission from the Russians.

[2] Segur, ii. 80, 83. Jom. iv. 146. Fain. ii. 94, 95.

It is not to be supposed from this circumstance, however, that he was insensible to the dangers of his position, or the increasing perils of a retreat during a Russian winter. These dangers were fully appreciated by his discerning genius: but, great as they were, they were overbalanced in his estimation by the necessary consequences of so fatal a measure as a general retreat.

His reasons for a protracted stay at Moscow.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

The illusion of his invincibility would instantly be dispelled, and Europe would resound with the intelligence of his overthrow. "I am blamed," said he, "for not retreating; but those who censure me do not consider that it requires a month to re-organize the army and evacuate the hospitals: that, if we abandon the wounded, the Cossacks will daily triumph over the sick and the isolated men. A retreat will appear a flight: and Europe will re-echo with the news. What a frightful course of perilous wars will date from my first retrograde step! I know well that Moscow, as a military position, is worth nothing: but as a political point its preservation is of inestimable value. The world regards me only as a general, forgetting that I am an emperor. In politics, you must never retrace your steps: if you have committed a fault, you must never show that you are conscious of it: error, steadily adhered to, becomes a virtue in the eyes of posterity."[1] By such specious arguments did this great man seek to justify the excessive self-love which formed the principal blot in his character, and strive to vindicate the postponement, the painful acknowledgment, of defeat; or rather the career of ambition, like that of guilt, is interminable, and, when once it pauses in its course, immediate ruin ensues.

[1] Segur, ii. 93, 94.

Contrary to the usual course of nature in that latitude, the climate, during the first weeks of October, continued fine, and the sun of autumn shed a mild radiance over the scene of approaching desolation. The Emperor, in his bulletins, compared it to the weather at Fontainbleau in the close of autumn. The Russians, accustomed to see the snow begin to fall at that period,[2] regarded the fineness of the wea-

Continued fineness of the weather there.

[2] Lab. 241; 23 and 25. Bulletin, Moniteur, Oct. 13 and 21, 1812.

ther as a sign of the Divine favour to their enemies: little imagining that it was lulling them into a fancied security on the eve of their destruction.

Meanwhile, the discipline and efficiency of the French army was daily declining amidst the license which followed the pillage of Moscow. All the efforts of their commanders were unable to arrest the growing insubordination of the troops. Pillage had enriched numbers; but amidst the general misery with which they were surrounded, the most precious articles were of no real value, and were gladly exchanged for a temporary supply of the necessaries of life. Miserable horse-flesh was eaten by the officers, arrayed in the richest furs and silks of the East, out of golden dishes: the common men were often on the point of starving. The Emperor sought to conceal his anxiety, and restore the military spirit of his soldiers, by daily reviews at the Kremlin; and, notwithstanding the fatigues and consumption of the campaign, the troops exhibited a brilliant appearance when they defiled through the palace of the Czars.[1]

Ruin of the discipline of the French army.

[1] Segur, ii. 66, 67. Lab. 237. Chamb. ii. 123, 124.

Very different was the spectacle exhibited in the patriot camp of the Russian army. Discipline, order, and regularity were there conspicuous: the chasms in the battalions were filled up by the numerous levies who arrived from the southern provinces: all the necessaries of life were to be had in abundance, and even many luxuries were brought thither by the wandering merchants from the neighbouring cities. The camp at Taroutino, now become the last hope of European freedom, presented the animating spectacle of universal enthusiasm: the veterans burned with desire to revenge the wrongs they had witnessed inflicted on their country; the young soldiers, to prove themselves worthy of their heroic brethren in arms.

Increasing strength and admirable situation of the Russian army.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

None of the provinces refused to answer the call for patriotic exertion; the roads were covered by recruits, joyously marching to the common rendezvous: the accustomed restraints to prevent desertion were abandoned, when all were pressing forward to the scene of danger. In the enthusiasm of the moment, the natural ties of affection seemed subdued by a holier feeling: the lamentations usually heard in the villages at the departure of the conscripts, were exchanged for shouts of exultation; and mothers wept for joy when they learned that fortune had selected their sons to be the defenders of their country. The Cossacks of the Don took arms in a body at the call of Platoff, and twenty-two regiments soon joined the army, composed chiefly of veterans whose period of service had expired, or youths who had never borne arms, but who joyfully resumed or took up their lances when their country was in danger. These rude allies entered the camp, uttering loud shouts, which resounded within the French lines; and the ancient war-cry of the crusaders, *Dieu le veut! Dieu le veut!* was heard from the descendants of the enemies of the champions of Jerusalem.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 90. Bout. ii. 117, 118.

Feelings and aspect of the recruits who crowded to the Russian standards.

The savage aspect of the horses which these warriors brought with them from the wilderness, their uncombed manes which still swept the ground, their wild and unbroken carriage, attested how far the spirit of resistance had penetrated, and the strength of the feeling which had brought the children of the desert into the dwellings of civilized life. Constant discharges of musketry from the Russian lines, indicated the multitude of recruits who were receiving the elements of military instruction. The troops at the advanced posts did not dissemble from the French the danger they ran by remaining longer in their pre-

sent position: they expressed their astonishment at the security of their invaders on the approach of winter; "in fifteen days," said they, "you will see your nails drop from your fingers, and your muskets fall from your hands: had you not enough of food in your own country, room for the living, tombs for the dead, that you have come so far to leave your bones in a hostile land?" CHAP. LXVII. 1812. Segur, ii. 90. Bout. ii. 121. Chamb. ii. 279.

Kutusoff clearly felt, and nobly expressed in his letters to the Emperor, both the sacrifice which it cost him to abandon Moscow, and the immense advantages which his present position gave him with a view to the future operations of the army. "Foreseeing," said he, "the necessity of the abandonment, I had already taken measures for removing from the city the chief part of the public and private riches it contained. Almost all the people have quitted the capital: that venerable city is left like a desert of ramparts and private houses; what the body is when the soul has quitted it, such is Moscow abandoned by its inhabitants. The soul of the empire is the people; and where they are, there is Moscow and the empire. Doubtless, the desperate resolution to abandon the venerated city of our ancestors, will wound every heart, and leave in the minds of the Russians ineffaceable regrets; but after all it is but a town for the empire—the sacrifice of a part for the salvation of the whole. That sacrifice will procure me the means of preserving my whole army. I am master of the road to Tula and Kaluga; and I cover, by the extended line of my troops, the magazines of our resources, the most abundant provinces of the empire, which furnish to our armies their flocks and their harvests. If I had taken up any other position, or had obstinately insisted upon preserving Moscow, I Kutusoff's clear views of the advantages of his situation. Sept. 16.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

should have been obliged to abandon these provinces to the enemy, and the consequence would have been the destruction of my army and of the empire. At present I preserve entire my communication with Tormasoff and Tchichagoff; and am in a situation to form, with my whole forces, a continuous line, which will completely intercept the communications of the enemy, and even straiten his intercourse with Smolensko itself. Thus, I trust, I shall be able to intercept all the succour which may be forwarded to him from his rear, and in the end constrain him to abandon the capital, and confound all his haughty projects."[1]

[1] Kutusoff to Alexander, Sept. 16, 1812. Chamb. ii. 278, 279.

Ruinous partisan warfare which went on, on the flanks and rear of the French.

Meanwhile, though a species of armistice reigned between the main armies, a destructive warfare began on the flanks and rear of the French position, which proved of the utmost moment in the sequel of the campaign. After the example of the Spaniards, the Russians established a chain of partisans round the French army, which cut off all their foraging parties; and, growing bolder from success, soon held them almost imprisoned in their cantonments. The militia of the contiguous provinces, aided by the Cossacks of the Don, formed a vast circle round Moscow, occupying every road, and cutting off all supplies of provisions to the invading army. The want of forage was soon so severely felt, that the cavalry were obliged to penetrate to a considerable distance in quest of subsistence; and these detachments, in most cases, fell into the hands of the numerous corps of the hostile circle. So early as the 10th October General Dorokoff captured a whole battalion of Westphalians, and numerous magazines in the town of Vereia; while Colonel Davidoff, on the great road to Smolensko, destroyed numerous detachments even of

the Imperial guard. This latter officer had the merit of recommending, and himself setting the example of the organization of this formidable species of force in the Russian war; and the event soon proved that it was calculated to effect far greater changes there than in the mountains of Spain, as the long line of communication in the French rear was open to their attacks, and the irregular hordes from the Don furnished an ample supply of troops admirably calculated for this kind of warfare. During the first three weeks of October, the partisans round Moscow made prisoners of no less than four thousand one hundred and eighty French soldiers; and the reports from Murat announced the alarming intelligence, that *one-half* of the whole surviving cavalry of the army had perished in these inglorious encounters.[1]

[1] Davidoff, Guerre des Partisans, 127. Segur, ii. 88, 90. Bout. ii. 119, 120, 138. Chamb. ii. 127, Fain. ii. 96.

Ruinous effect of the plunder of Moscow on the French army.

Although the principal object of the Russians in the conflagration of Moscow had been to render it impossible for the French to remain there; yet the effect which did take place, was not in the end less disastrous to the army of the invaders than the design which was originally in view could have been. After the troops returned to the capital, immense stores of all sorts were discovered, which had been deposited in the innumerable cellars with which the city abounded, and escaped the conflagration. The magnitude of the booty which thus came to be at their disposal, proved fatal to the discipline of the soldiers, while it in no degree relieved the real wants of the army. Wine, brandy, and rice; gold and silver vessels; sumptuous apparel, rich silks, embroidered stuffs, superb pelisses and gorgeous draperies, were to be had in abundance; but corn and forage there was none for the horses, though there was

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

immense ammunition for the guns.* These were the real wants of the army, and they were in no degree relieved by the vast and rich stores which, when the conflagration ceased, were extracted from the cellars of the city. Thus the French suffered more from the continued occupation of Moscow, than they could possibly have done from being obliged to abandon it; for they found amidst its ruins luxuries which proved fatal to their discipline, while they did not obtain the stores necessary to their existence.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 267, 163. Fain. ii. 101, 137.

Increasing dangers thence arising to the French position.

The eyes of the French army were now opened to the imminent danger which they had incurred in advancing to Moscow after the battle of Borodino, and how well founded had been the advice so strenuously given by Marshal Ney, to retire at once from that fatal field. To gain the victory on that occasion required the sacrifice of so large a portion of the army, and especially of the cavalry, that they were no longer able to keep the field, except in large masses. In proportion as the light troops of the enemy were augmented by the concourse of the nomade tribes from the eastern provinces of the empire, the shattered squadrons of France, which had escaped the carnage of Borodino, melted away before the fatigues and the dangers of incessant warfare. It was in vain, therefore, that above a hundred thousand veteran troops still occupied the capital, and that a thousand pieces of cannon still guarded the approaches to the Kremlin: this vast assemblage of armed men was in danger of perishing, from its

* "We have found in Moscow 2,000,000 of cartridges, 300,000 pounds of powder, 300,000 of saltpetre and sulphur, and an immense quantity of cannon and balls. It is triple what we consumed in the last battle. We can now fight four such battles as Borodino."—NAPOLEON *to* GENERAL LARIBOISSERE, *18th September* 1812, FAIN. ii. 137.

very numbers, for want of subsistence, in the midst of an exhausted country; this formidable train of artillery might soon become an unserviceable burden, from the rapid destruction of the horses which conveyed it. The French infantry, like the Roman legions, would be powerless in the midst of the Scythian cavalry; and the disasters of Antony and Julian appeared about to be renewed in the midst of the solitudes of Russia.[1] CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

[1] Guil. de Vaud. 274

Impressed with these ideas, a general feeling of disquietude filled the French army, and the more intelligent of the officers were seized with the most gloomy forebodings as to the fate of the army, if the stay at Moscow was prolonged for any considerable time. So strongly impressed was one of the ablest of its officers with these dangers, that he has told us himself that he regarded the burning of Moscow as a fortunate event, as it was likely to render a stay in the heart of Russia impossible, and compel the Emperor, how unwilling soever, to a retreat.[2] Napoleon himself, though he had opened a negotiation with Kutusoff, from which he still hoped the happiest results, yet in private was well aware that if these attempts at a negotiation proved fruitless, he would be driven to that extremity. In the first days of October, only three weeks after he had entered the capital, he gave orders for evacuating the hospitals on Smolensko; and, on the 6th of the same month, he wrote to Berthier, strongly urging the adoption of the measures necessary for a retreat by Mojaisk and Wiazma to that city.[3]* Napoleon's early preparations for a retreat.

[2] Dumas, Souv. iii. 450.

Oct. 2.

[3] Fain. ii. 147, 148.

* "Give instant orders to the generals commanding on the road to Smolensko, to make themselves masters of a circuit of ten leagues round their respective stations, and collect all the horses and carriages which they contain to convey our wounded. Charge the Duke of Abrantes, on his highest responsibility, to evacuate the wounded here

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

In truth, however, the commands of Napoleon to keep his rear clear, and secure the communication with Smolensko, were more easily issued than obeyed; for the commander along the line to Wilna, notwithstanding all the pains he had taken to station troops in *echellon* along the whole road, was quite unable to keep off the enemy; the number and audacity of the parties who infested that vital artery soon became so excessive, that Baraguay d'Hilliers, who was in command at Wiazma, wrote to Berthier so early as the 26th September, that the number of the partisans by whom he was surrounded was daily augmenting: that he was entirely destitute of provisions or ammunition, and could not exist unless a magazine were formed at his station; and that he was under the necessity of stopping the convoys for Moscow, to get food and ammunition for his own troops: and ten days afterwards he wrote that he was as completely blockaded at Smolensko as at Wiazma; that he had not troops sufficient to guard a single convoy; that the regiments which came up to join him from the Vistula were little better than skeletons, with almost all their officers dead; that without reinforcements the passage could no longer be kept open; that eight times the forces at his disposal were indispensable; and that, notwithstanding his urgent entreaties, he had not received a man to aid him in his efforts.[1]

Extreme difficulty of keeping open the communication in his rear. Sept. 20.

Sept. 30.

[1] Baraguay d'Hilliers to Berthier, Sept. 20 and 30, 1812. Chamb. iii. 280, 286.

During this critical period, big with the fate of Russia and of the world, Napoleon was amused by the show of a negotiation, which, as already seen, he had opened with the Russian commander-in-chief. But astute as he was, alike in the cabinet as the field,

Alexander's firm resolution not to treat for peace.

and at Kolotskoi on Wiazma; and the commander there to do the same on Smolensko."—NAPOLEON *to* BERTHIER, *Oct.* 16, 1812, FAIN. ii. 418.

he here proved no match for the diplomatic talent of the Russian generals, and suffered himself to be duped by that profound dissimulation, in all ages the mark of the Russian character, and which in an especial manner distinguished their greyhaired chief. Kutusoff's real object was to gain time, till winter set in, and retreat became impossible, or obviously ruinous to the French army. But even this shadow of a negotiation, at so critical a period, was in the highest degree displeasing to the Emperor Alexander, who was no sooner informed of the reception of Lauriston at the Russian headquarters, and the commencement of an opening for conferences, than he wrote to Kutusoff, expressing his high displeasure at the proceeding, and his absolute command, to "admit of no negotiation whatever, or relation tending towards peace with the enemy."[1]*

[1] Bout. ii. 131. Chamb ii. 208, 303.

At length, on the 13th October, a shower of snow fell, and announced the approach of another danger of a still more formidable kind. At the same time, Kutusoff made the French lines re-echo with discharges of artillery, in commemoration of the entry of Madrid by the English troops. In a proclamation addressed to his soldiers, he declared, "The campaign,

First appearance of snow, and increasing disquiet of the French. Oct. 13.

* "The report of Prince Michel Larionowitz has informed me of the conference you have had with the French aide-de-camp Lauriston. The conversations I had with you at the moment of your departure for the army intrusted to your care, have sufficiently made you aware of my firm resolution to avoid with the enemy every sort of negotiation or conference tending to peace. I now repeat, in the most solemn manner, the same injunction; and it is my command that this resolution should be acted upon in the most rigorous and immovable manner. I have in like manner learned, with the most extreme displeasure, that General Beningsen has had a conference with the King of Naples, and that too without any assignable motive. I now order you to make him acquainted with my high displeasure, and I require of you the most rigorous solicitude and watchfulness to prevent any such unauthorized

CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

finished on the part of the enemy, is only commencing on ours. Madrid has fallen. The hand of Omnipotence presses on Napoleon. Moscow will be his prison or his tomb: the Grand Army will perish with him: France will fall in Russia."[1]

[1] Bulletins, iv. 112. Seg. ii. 103. Chamb. ii. 271.

Napoleon prepares to retreat.

Alarmed by the visible approach of winter, Napoleon at length made more serious preparations for his retreat. Orders were issued for the purchase of twenty thousand horses: the trophies of the Kremlin, the great cross of St Ivan, and the wounded, were directed to move upon Mojaisk: the muskets of the wounded at Kolotskoi and the caissons of the reserve, were ordered to be destroyed. The troops were commanded to be provided with forage and subsistence for a long march: a vain attempt in a country totally exhausted of resources, and in which he was hemmed in by a circle of enterprising enemies.[2]

[1] Segur, i. 100, 103 Chamb. ii. 217. Fain. ii. 149, 157.

Kutusoff's picture of the state of his army. Oct. 12.

Kutusoff, at this period, wrote in the most encouraging terms to the Emperor, on the immense advantages which he had derived from the position in front of the southern provinces, which he had so skilfully obtained.—"The army," said he, "is at rest, and daily receives reinforcements. The different regiments fill up their chasms, and complete their numbers, by means of recruits who daily arrive from the southern provinces, and who burn to measure their strength with the enemy. Abundant forage and good water have entirely re-established our cavalry. The troops experience no want of provisions. All the roads in our rear are covered with

step being taken by any of your generals or officers in future. All the instructions you have received from me; all the determinations contained in my orders; in a word, every thing should conspire to convince you that my resolution is not to be shaken, and that at this moment no consideration on earth can induce me to terminate the war, or weaken the sacred duty of avenging our injured country."—ALEXANDER *to* KUTUSOFF, *9th Oct.* 1812, *Chamb.* ii. 304.

convoys of provisions coming from the most abundant provinces. Convalescent officers and soldiers daily rejoin their standards; while the sick and wounded, nursed in the bosom of their country, enjoy the inestimable advantages of receiving the tender cares of their families. On the other hand, such is the state of disorganization of the French army, that they are not in a condition to undertake any thing against us. They can only obtain provisions with extreme difficulty; and all the prisoners concur in declaring that they have nothing but horse-flesh, and that bread is even more rare than butcher meat. Their artillery horses, and those of the cavalry, suffer immensely: the greater part of their dragoons perished in the battle of Borodino, and those which remain are fast melting away under the destructive attacks of our light horse. Hardly a day passes in which we do not make three hundred prisoners. The peasants, from the tops of their steeple, give signal of the enemy's approach, and join in attacking them. Such is their spirit, that numbers every where come forward demanding arms, and they inflict summary chastisement on the backward and deserters. The arm of the Most High is evidently upraised against our enemies. I have just received the account of the capture of Madrid by the Spaniards and English."[1]

[1] Kutusoff to Alexander, Oct. 12, 1812. Chamb. ii. 305, 307.

At length, having completed the re-organization of his army, the Russian general resolved to resume offensive operations. The French advanced guard, under Murat and Poniatowski, thirty thousand strong, was posted in the neighbourhood of Winkowo, and kept so negligent a guard as to offer a tempting opportunity for a surprise. Nevertheless, the Russian commander hesitated at striking so important a

Kutusoff resumes offensive operations. Oct. 17.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

blow, lest he should awaken Napoleon from his fancied security before the commencement of winter had rendered a regular retreat impracticable; but, when it became evident that the French army was about to retire, he no longer hesitated, and intrusted the execution of the attack to General Beningsen. The attacking force was divided into five columns: the first, under the command of Count Orloff Denisoff, was destined to turn the enemy's left, and cut off his retreat; the second, under the orders of General Bagawouth, supported by sixty pieces of cannon, was directed to attack the left, and support Count Orloff; Count Ostermann, with the third column, was ordered to maintain the communication with the two last columns, under the orders of Generals Doctoroff and Raeffskoi, which, with seventy-two pieces of cannon, were intended to attack the enemy in front, and prevent him from sending succours to the left, where the serious impression was expected to be made. To cover the whole movement, General Milaradowitch, with the advanced guard, was to remain in his old position till the firing had commenced, when he was to support the column which led on the attack in front, and push on with Raeffskoi towards Winkowo.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 140, 143.

Successful attack on Murat at Winkowo.

At seven in the evening of the 17th October, the attacking columns broke up from the camp at Taroutino, and marched during the night to the different stations assigned to them. The attack was intended to have been made at daybreak on the 18th; but the delays consequent on the march of so many detached bodies delayed the commencement of the battle till seven. The French, though taken by surprise, defended themselves bravely till the appearance of Count Orloff, in the rear of their left, threw

Oct. 18.

the cavalry of Sebastiani into disorder, which soon communicated itself to their whole line. If the third column, destined to support Orloff, had been on their ground at the appointed time, the Russians might have seized the great road to Moscow, and entirely cut off the enemy's retreat; but the non-arrival of this corps having deprived him of the expected succour, Beningsen thought himself compelled to forego this immense advantage, and allow the enemy to retain possession of the road in their rear. Nevertheless, their retreat was conducted in such confusion, that fifteen hundred prisoners, thirty-eight pieces of cannon, forty caissons, and the whole baggage of the army, fell into the hands of the victors, who had only to lament the loss of General Bagawouth, who was struck by a cannon-shot while bravely leading on his column, and five hundred men killed and wounded. Had the third column arrived on its ground at the appointed time, or had Beningsen acted with more vigour even with the troops which had come up, the French corps would have been totally destroyed. The capture of the baggage proved the extreme want which prevailed in the French encampment. In the kitchen of Murat were found roasted cats and boiled horse-flesh.[1]

[1] Jom. iv. 163. Bout. ii. 144. 147. Fain. ii. 158. Chamb. ii. 212. Segur, ii. 106, 107.

This disastrous intelligence reached Napoleon as he was reviewing the corps of Marshal Ney in the Kremlin, previous to its departure from Moscow.[2] He instantly dispatched couriers in every direction: a thousand orders were given in the course of the evening; the fire of his youthful years reappeared in his visage.[3] Before daybreak on the morning of the 19th, he left the Kremlin, exclaiming, "Let us

[2] Napoleon marches towards Kaluga.

[3] Segur, ii. 106, 107.

[3] Segur, ii. 108.

CHAP. LXVII.

march on Kaluga, and woe to those who interrupt our passage!"

1812.

Napoleon left Moscow at the head of one hundred and five thousand combatants, six hundred pieces of cannon, and two thousand military chariots; an imposing force, and seemingly still capable of conquering the world. His infantry had increased by ten thousand men during his residence at the Kremlin; partly from the recovery of the wounded, partly the arrival of reinforcements from the west of Europe. But the most alarming diminution was perceptible in the cavalry: numerous corps of dismounted horsemen had been formed; and those who were still mounted had evidently the greatest difficulty to urge on their exhausted steeds. The long train of artillery was slowly dragged forward; and it was obvious that, after a few days' march, the horses that moved it would sink under their fatigue.[1]

Force which left Moscow.

[1] Segur, ii. 112. Jom. iv. 164. Chamb. ii. 316. Fain. ii. 161.

In the rear of the still formidable mass of warriors marched a long and seemingly interminable train of chariots, waggons, and captives, bearing the pillage and riches of the devoted city. The trophies of imperial ambition, the cross of St Ivan, and the Persian and Turkish standards found in the capital, were mingled with the spoils of individual cupidity. The common soldiers strove to support the weight of Asiatic finery which they had ransacked from the ruins; the carriages groaned under the load of Eastern luxuries, which the troops vainly hoped to carry with them to their own country. The followers of the camp, in number nearly forty thousand, of all nations and sexes, and clothed for the most part in the sumptuous dresses which they had obtained during the pillage, formed a motley train, whose clamours aug-

Strange caravans which followed the army.

mented the general confusion; and in the chariots were many young Russian females, the willing slaves of their seducers, abandoning the country of which they were unworthy. In the midst of this fantastic train, which covered the country as far as the eye could reach, were to be seen columns of that redoubtable infantry which had borne the French standards in triumph through every capital of continental Europe, and which still preserved, amidst the motley group, its martial array: but the artillery horses were already sinking under their fatigues; and the diminished regiments of the cavalry told too clearly how fatally the war had affected that important branch of the service. Confusion was already apparent in the line of march: no human efforts could force along that stupendous array of artillery, caissons, baggage-waggons, and carts; the rear-guard, in despair, passed on before the whole had defiled before them, and quantities of rich booty was, at every step, abandoned to the enemy. The whole resembled rather a wandering caravan, or a roving nation, than an army of disciplined troops; and forcibly recalled to the imagination the predatory warfare of antiquity, when the northern barbarians returned to their deserts loaded with the spoils of captive provinces.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 316, 317. Fain. ii. 161. Segur, ii. 113. Jom. iv. 164. Lab. 249.

Kutusoff broke up from the camp at Taroutino at the head of eighty thousand regular troops, and nearly thirty thousand militia or Cossacks. These irregular bands of horsemen, in the pursuit of a retreating army, were more serviceable than the *élite* of the Imperial guard. The army was immediately marched towards Malo-Jaroslawitz, the strongest position on the new road from Moscow to Kaluga, in the hope of anticipating the French Emperor in

Kutusoff moves towards Kaluga to bar the passage of Napoleon.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

the occupation of that important position; while General Winzingerode, who lay in the neighbourhood of Klin, on the route to Twer, with ten thousand men, advanced towards Moscow. He marched without opposition through the ruined streets of the capital; but having imprudently approached the Kremlin to summon the garrison to surrender, he was made prisoner by Marshal Mortier, who commanded the French rearguard that still occupied its walls. Shortly afterwards, however, the invaders retired, leaving to the Russians the ancient palace of the Czars, armed by forty-two pieces of cannon; but, before his departure, the French general blew up a part of its venerable edifices by the express command of Napoleon — a despicable piece of revenge on the part of so great a commander, and singularly expressive of the envenomed state of his mind.[1]

[1] Fain. ii. 169. Bout. ii. 155. Jom. iv. 166, 171.

Advance of Napoleon to Malo-Jaroslawitz, and desperate battle there.

Napoleon, after advancing on the 19th on the old road to Kaluga, which led straight to the Russian position of Taroutino, for some hours, turned suddenly to the right, and gained, by cross roads, the new route, which led to the same place by Malo-Jaroslawitz. This skilful manœuvre was concealed from the Russians by the corps of Marshal Ney, which continued slowly advancing towards the old position of Taroutino. In consequence, Platoff, with fifteen regiments of Cossacks, was at first only detached to Malo-Jaroslawitz, and the main body of the army did not move in that direction till the evening of the 23d. The corps of Doctoroff, by a rapid night march, reached that important position at five in the morning of the 24th, but found it already occupied by General Delzons, with two battalions of French infantry. These troops were immediately attacked and expelled from the town by

the Russian chasseurs: the Viceroy, however, having come up shortly after with his whole corps, drove out the light troops of Doctoroff, but was in his turn compelled to yield to the vigorous attacks of the Russian infantry. The combat continued with the utmost fury on both sides till evening. The town, which speedily took fire, was taken and retaken seven different times: the rival nations fought with the bayonet in the midst of the burning houses; but at length the Viceroy succeeded in finally dislodging the enemy. During the action, however, the army of Kutusoff gained the precious hours requisite to reach the other road: his columns, during the whole day, were seen, in two long black lines, rapidly advancing towards the heights behind the scene of action, and before night they were firmly established on the wooded eminences in the rear of Malo-Jaroslawitz. The Viceroy, after a glorious combat, found himself master of a mass of bloody and smoking ruins, dearly purchased by the loss of five thousand of his best troops; while one hundred thousand men, and seven hundred pieces of cannon, posted on a semicircle in his front, precluded the possibility of a farther advance towards Kaluga without a general battle.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 157, 161, 162. Segur, ii. 119, 141.

The loss of the Russians was as great as that of the French; and they had to lament the death of the brave General Dorokhoff, who fell in an early period of the engagement. The French remained masters of the field of battle; but the advantage gained by Kutusoff was of incalculable importance. By interposing his whole army between the enemy and Kaluga, and occupying the strong position behind the town, he compelled Napoleon either to fight at a great disadvantage, or renounce his pro-

Results of the battle.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

jected march upon Kaluga, and fall back on the wasted line of the Smolensko road. Either of these alternatives was equivalent to a defeat; and the event proved that the consequences of this bloody engagement were more disastrous to the French than any event which had befallen them since the commencement of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Jom. iv. 170, 171, 172. Bout. ii. 163, 167. Segur, ii. 125.

Napoleon's grievous embarrassment at this result.

Napoleon remained in the neighbourhood of the field of battle the whole of the night of the 24th, and sent out numerous parties to reconnoitre the Russian position. The strength of the ground, in the opinion of his most experienced officers, precluded the possibility of a successful attack. No alternative remained but to fall back on the Smolensko road. The agitation of his mind, in consequence, became so excessive, that his attendants dared not approach him. Upon returning to his miserable cottage, he sent for Berthier, Murat, and Bessieres. They sat round a table where was spread out a map of the country, and the Emperor spoke to them at first of the change which the arrival of Kutusoff in the high grounds beyond Malo-Jaroslawitz had made in his situation. After a little discussion, however, he became meditative, and resting his cheeks on his hands, and his elbows on the table, his eyes fixed on the map, he remained for above an hour in moody silence, without motion or uttering a word. The three generals, respecting his mental agony, preserved silence, merely looking at each other during that long period; then suddenly starting up, he dismissed them without making them acquainted with his resolution. Immediately after, however, he sent to Davoust, ordering him to put himself at the head of the advanced guard, as he was to be at the outposts with his guards at daybreak on the following

morning. Ney, who was at a short distance, was directed to take a position between Barowsk and Malo-Jaroslawitz, after leaving two divisions to protect the reserve parks and baggage at the former of these towns.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 334, 335. Segur, ii. 127, 129.

At daybreak on the 25th, he set out in person to examine the ground, and was advancing through a confused mass of baggage-waggons and artillery, when suddenly a tumult arose; the cry was heard, "It is Platoff—they are ten thousand!" and a large body of Cossacks was seen directly bearing down upon the Imperial escort. It turned out to be Platoff, at the head of ten regiments of Cossacks, who made a dash to seize a park of forty pieces of artillery stationed near the village of Gorodnia, where the headquarters of Napoleon were placed. The Emperor himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner: General Rapp was thrown down while bravely combating, and his immediate attendants were compelled to use their sabres against the lances of the enemy. The squadrons on service who were immediately in attendance on the Emperor, were overthrown and pierced through by numbers; and it was not till the grenadiers *à cheval* and the dragoons of the guard appeared, that the irruption was stopped. The Cossacks, ignorant of the inestimable prize which was within their grasp, dashed through his attendants, and seized the artillery: but they were only able to carry off eleven pieces, from the want of horses to convey them, and the rapid appearance of the cavalry of the Imperial guard. Napoleon, after this distressing incident, returned to Gorodnia, but again left it at ten o'clock, and advanced to Malo-Jaroslawitz. According to his usual custom, he rode over the whole field which had been the theatre of such desperate

Napoleon, is nearly made prisoner.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

strife on the preceding day, and moved on so as to see with his own eyes the elevated plateau which the Russian army, three quarters of a league in advance, still occupied. This done, he returned at five in the afternoon to Gorodnia, and nothing farther was attempted on either side that day.[1]

[1] Chamb. ii. 336, 337. Fain. ii. 250, 251. Segur, ii. 131. Bout. ii. 165.

Deliberations at the French headquarters on the course to be pursued.

This incident, however, was more than irritating: it proved the ruinous inferiority of the French to their enemies in light troops. Napoleon, in consequence, deemed it too hazardous to attempt to force the enemy's position, and returned pensively to his miserable habitation. An emperor, two kings, and three marshals were there assembled: upon their deliberations hung the destinies of the world. Murat, with his usual fire, recommended the boldest course. "Why should we fear the formidable position of the Russians? Give me but the remains of the cavalry and that of the Imperial guard, and I will plunge into their forests, and open the road to Kaluga at the sword's point." But Bessieres, who commanded the cavalry of the guard, and deemed its preservation essential to the Emperor's safety, immediately observed, "That the moment was past, both in the army and in the guard, for such efforts: already the means of transport were beginning to fail, and the charge of Murat would be feebly supported. And who were the enemies against whom he proposed thus to risk a hazardous attack? men who had evinced, in the combat of the preceding day, a heroism worthy of veteran soldiers, though they were recruits who had hardly learned the use of their arms. A *retreat* had become unavoidably necessary." The Emperor unwillingly acquiesced in the proposal, observing, "Hardihood has had its day: we have already done too much for glory: nothing remains to be thought of but the

safety of the army." Davoust then proposed that "the retreat should be conducted by Medyn to Smolensko, a line of road hitherto untouched, and abounding in resources for the wounded; whereas the Mojaisk line was utterly wasted, and presented only dust and ashes." This advice was strongly resisted by Murat, who represented the extreme hazard of "exposing the flank of the army during so long a march to the attacks of the numerous light troops of the enemy." Napoleon adopted the opinion of the King of Naples, and orders were issued for the retreat of the army by Borowsk and Mojaisk to Smolensko.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 137, 138. 27th Bulletin. Bull. iv. 148.

The ruins of Malo-Jaroslawitz, exhibited the most terrible spectacle. The streets could be distinguished only by the heaps of dead who were piled upon each other; while smoking ruins and half-consumed skeletons marked the position of the houses. From beneath these ruins, the wounded occasionally dragged their wasted forms, and besought, with earnest cries, the passengers to put a period to their sufferings.[2] Napoleon, notwithstanding his familiarity with scenes of this description, was startled at the sight; and the proof it afforded of the determination of his enemies, contributed not a little to the resolution which he adopted.

Dreadful appearance of the field of battle.

[2] Lab. 264. Segur, ii. 132.

At daybreak on the 26th, the fatal retreat commenced; and the victor in a hundred battles, for the first time in his life retired in the open field from his enemies. By a singular coincidence, the Russian troops at the same moment abandoned their positions and fell back in the direction of Kaluga. Both armies, struck with mutual awe, were flying from each other. The reason assigned by Kutusoff for this singular measure, was the inquietude which he felt for the road by Medyn to Kaluga:[3] but the

A retreat is resolved on.

[3] Bout. ii. 168, 169. Segur, ii. 142, 143.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

adoption of it was a serious fault, which had nearly endangered all the advantages of the campaign.

Dejection which ensued among the troops.

Meanwhile, the French army, ignorant of the movements of the enemy, silently and mournfully continued its retreat. The most gloomy presentiments filled the minds of the soldiers: experience had already made them acquainted with the length of deserts they had to traverse before reaching a friendly territory, and that on this long line of more than two hundred and fifty leagues, Smolensko and Minsk alone offered resources for their use. Dejection and despondency, in consequence, universally prevailed; and the discipline of the troops, accustomed to victory but unused to disaster, became relaxed from the moment that they began to retreat before their enemies.[1]

Segur, ii. 145.

Views of Napoleon in commencing the retreat.

Napoleon calculated chiefly upon the support of Victor, who, with above thirty thousand fresh troops, had been stationed since the beginning of September in the neighbourhood of Smolensko. This corps, joined to the reinforcements which were daily arriving from the westward, and the detached soldiers of the Grand Army who might be re-formed into battalions, would amount to fifty thousand men; and with such support he hoped to maintain the line of the Dwina till the return of spring. But the operations of Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff rendered this project impracticable; and, even without their assistance, the superiority of the Russians in cavalry would have rendered any position within their territory untenable for any length of time. The French retired by Borowsk to Vereia, where the Emperor's headquarters were established on the 27th. The weather was serene: it was still compared by Napoleon to the autumn at Fontainbleau.[2]

[2] Bulletins, iv. 143. 20th and 27th Bull. Segur, ii. 145.

In the course of their retreat, they destroyed all

the towns through which the army passed: Borowsk and Vereia shared the fate of Moscow. At the latter town the Emperor was joined by Marshal Mortier, who after blowing up, as already mentioned, part of the Kremlin, had fallen back on the main army with his detachment. Winzingerode, made prisoner at the Kremlin, was then presented to the Emperor: his appearance excited one of those transports of rage which were not unusual in his irritable moods: but which, on this occasion, happily passed away without actual violence to the Russian general.[1]

1812.

[1] Segur, ii. 152, 153. 26th and 27th Bull. iv. 146.

As soon as Kutusoff was apprised of the enemy's retreat, he resolved, instead of pursuing them on the wasted line which they had adopted, to move the main body of his army by a parallel road towards Mojaisk and Wiazma, and to harass their retreating columns by a large body of Cossacks and light troops. General Milaradowitch, in consequence, at the head of twenty-five thousand light troops, was directed to move along a road parallel and near to the great Smolensko route; while Platoff, with the Cossacks, pressed the French rearguard, and Kutusoff himself, at the head of the whole army, moved in two columns towards Wiazma.[2]

Kutusoff moves in pursuit on a parallel line.

[2] Bout. ii. 180, 181. Jom. iv. 173

The whole French army had regained the Smolensko road on the 29th. The corps marched at intervals of half a day's journey from each other, and for some days were not seriously harassed by the enemy. In passing through a heap of ruins, the soldiers recognised some features of a scene formerly known to them: it was Mojaisk, formerly the scene of so much glory. The steeple alone remained in the midst of the desert: and its clock, still "unheard, repeated its hours." They approached an open plain, and soon the multitudes of unburied dead, whose bones had begun to whiten in the sun—the broken and ruined

The French repass the field of Borodino.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

redoubts which appeared at intervals—the rugged surface of the ground, which was still torn by the cannon-shot, announced the bloody field of Borodino. Thirty thousand skeletons, innumerable fragments of helmets, cuirasses, and arms, broken guns, carriages, standards, and bloody uniforms, formed the sad remains of that scene of glory. The soldiers, in passing, gazed in silence at the great redoubt, so lately the theatre of mortal strife, now marked by the silence and devastation of an extinguished volcano: regret for the loss of their companions in arms was mingled with the painful sense of the fruitlessness of the sacrifice; and they hurried from the scene of desolation with melancholy recollections of the past, and gloomy anticipations of the future.[1]

[1] Lab. 275, 276. Segur, ii. 160. Bout. ii. 173, 182. Fain. ii. 117.

Woful spectacle exhibited on passing the abbey of Kolotskoi.

In passing the great abbey of Kolotskoi, the army received a lamentable addition to its numbers in a multitude of wounded men, who had escaped from that scene of horror to join their retreating companions. Thousands had perished in the hospital from the total inadequacy of the means of relief to the prodigious accumulation of wounded who had been left: but a greater number than could have been expected had been saved, in consequence of the heroic and skilful efforts of the French surgeons. These miserable men crawled to the side of the road, and, with uplifted hands and lamentable cries, besought their comrades not to leave them to the horrors of famine or the fury of the enemy. At the distance of two leagues from Mojaisk, five hundred of these unhappy wretches had collected round a deserted barn: for several days they had received no food: an officer and twenty-five men were on the spot to guard them, and two surgeons were in attendance to dress their wounds; but the former had no food to

give them, and the latter no linen or salves to apply to their mangled limbs. Napoleon made the greatest efforts to get them the means of conveyance: but the troops, whom misery had already begun to render selfish, murmured at displacing the spoils of Moscow by their bleeding companions, and could with difficulty be constrained to give them a place in their chariots.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 164. Lab. 280. Chamb. iii. 252.

Disorders which already appeared on the line of retreat.

Although only a few Cossacks as yet harassed the rear of the retreating army, the discouragement of the troops had become very great, and the dreadful features of the retreat already began to appear. Baggage-waggons were abandoned at every step, from the failure of the horses which drew them; the infantry and cavalry marched pell-mell in the utmost confusion; and the incessant explosions along the whole line, demonstrated how many of the ammunition-waggons required to be sacrificed to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. The retreat was rapidly becoming a flight;[2] the troops were beginning to separate from the marching columns in quest of plunder or subsistence; and numbers of horses were slain to furnish food for the hungry multitudes who surrounded them.

[2] Bout. ii. 183. Lab. 283. Segur, ii. 165. Fain. ii. 118, 120.

Severe action at Wiazma, Nov. 2.

On the 2d November, the headquarters reached Wiazma. The Emperor flattered himself that he had got the start of Kutusoff by several marches, and that his troops would not be disquieted by the enemy during the remainder of the retreat; but this delusive quiet was not of long continuance. On approaching that town, the corps of Davoust, which formed the rearguard of the army, found, on the 3d, the advanced guard of Milaradowitch posted on the southern side of the great road, while Platoff, with a large body of Cossacks, pressed the rear of the army. The

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

Emperor, with the guard and the first corps of the army, was already advanced on the road to Smolensko, and the corps of the Viceroy and Ney alone remained to resist the attack. By a vigorous charge, the Russian cavalry, under Wassilchikoff, in the first instance broke in upon the line of the French retreat, and established themselves astride on the great road, in the interval between the corps of the Viceroy and that of Davoust; while Platoff, the moment that the cannonade commenced, attacked the rear of the latter at Federowskoie. If the infantry of Milaradowitch had been at hand to support his cavalry while the Cossacks pressed his rear, the corps of Davoust would have been totally destroyed. But the infantry, unable to keep pace with the rapid advance of the cavalry, was still far behind; and General Wassilchikoff was left, for more than half an hour, to resist alone all the efforts of the enemy to dislodge him from his position. Meanwhile, the Viceroy, hearing of the danger of Davoust's corps, retraced his steps, and drew back his advanced guard, which had already reached Wiazma, to the scene of danger. Milaradowitch, in his turn, was now severely pressed between the advancing troops of Davoust and the returning corps of Eugene; but he bravely maintained his post near the great road till the infantry of Prince Eugene of Wirtemburg came up to his support. But the moment of decisive success was now over. Davoust, with admirable presence of mind, had contrived to get his artillery and baggage across the fields in the neighbourhood of Wassilchikoff during the continuance of the action; and the united French corps were now intent only on securing their retreat to Wiazma. In doing so, however, they were keenly pursued by Milaradowitch,

who was now supported both by his own infantry and the Cossacks of Platoff; a numerous artillery thundered on their retreating columns; and though the soldiers of the Viceroy still kept their ranks, those of Davoust, exhausted by the fatigues of the retreat, fell into confusion. At this critical moment, the vanguard of Kutusoff beyond Wiazma was heard to commence a cannonade on the corps of Ney, which was in advance of the Viceroy; and the troops, conceiving themselves beset on all sides, fell back in disorder into Wiazma. General Paskewitch, at the head of his brave division, rushed into the town, and drove the enemy through the streets at the point of the bayonet. In the midst of the general confusion, the houses took fire, which stopped the pursuit; and the shattered corps of Davoust, in their bivouacs beyond the walls, counted their diminished ranks and re-formed their battalions by the light of the conflagration.[1] Segur, ii. 177, 179. Bout. ii. 185, 189, 192. Lab. 293. Fain. ii. 121, 125. Chamb. iii. 263, 269.

In this engagement the French lost above six thousand men, of whom two thousand were made prisoners, while the loss of the Russians did not exceed two thousand. The corps of Davoust had, before the battle, lost ten thousand men by fatigue or desertion since the retreat commenced at Malo-Jaroslawitz; and twenty-seven pieces of their artillery had fallen into the hands of the enemy. When the troops resumed their march on the following day, they were astonished at the smallness of their numbers. There seems to be no room for doubt, that had Kutusoff supported by a sufficient force the bold advance of Milaradowitch, or hastened his own march so as to anticipate the French vanguard at Wiazma, he would have had every chance of destroying a great part of their army; and his own troops

Results of the battle, and failure of Kutusoff to push the advantage to the utmost.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

were grievously disappointed at the opportunity being allowed to escape. But the Russian commander, knowing the severity of the season which was about to commence, and the multiplied obstacles which were preparing to arrest the retreat of Napoleon, deemed, and perhaps wisely, that the surer course was to let the enemy waste away before the cold of winter, before he attempted to envelope the main body; and confine his attacks at present to the rearguard, whose fatigues had already reduced them to that state of debility which might soon be expected to become general in the whole army.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 193, 195. Segur, ii. 171.

Ney assumes the command of the rearguard.

The corps of Davoust, which had suffered so severely, was now replaced by that of Marshal Ney as the rearguard; and this heroic general began to cover that retreat, mortal to so many others, immortal to him. On the 4th and 5th the retreat continued, and in passing the Lake of Semlewo, the grand cross of Ivan and the armour of the Kremlin, the trophies of Moscow, were buried in the waves.[2]

[2] Segur, ii. 165, 168.

Commencement of the great frosts, and appearance of the atmosphere. Nov. 6.

The weather, though cold and frosty at night, had hitherto been clear and bright during the day; and the continued, though now level and powerless sun, had cheered the hearts of the soldiers. But on the 6th November the Russian winter set in with unwonted severity. Cold fogs first rose from the surface of the ground, and obscured the heretofore unclouded face of the sun; a few flakes of snow next began to float in the atmosphere, and filled the army with dread: gradually the light of day declined, and a thick murky darkness overspread the firmament. The wind rose, and soon blew with frightful violence, howling through the forests, or sweeping over the plains with resistless fury: the snow fell in thick and continued showers, which soon covered the

earth with an impenetrable clothing, confounding all objects together, and leaving the army to wander in the dark through an icy desert. Great numbers of the soldiers, in struggling to get forward, fell into hollows or ditches which were concealed by the treacherous surface, and perished miserably before the eyes of their comrades: others were swallowed up in the moving hills, which, like the sands of the desert, preceded the blast of death. To fall was certain destruction: the severity of the tempest speedily checked respiration; and the snow, accumulating round the sufferer, soon formed a little sepulchre for his remains. The road, and the fields in its vicinity, were rapidly strewed with these melancholy eminences: and the succeeding columns found the surface rough and almost impassable from the multitude of these icy mounds that lay upon their route.[1]

[1] Lab. 299 300. Segur, ii. 181. Chamb. ii. 274. Fa'n. ii. 138, 140.

Accustomed as the soldiers had been to death in its ordinary forms, there was something singularly appalling in the uniformity of the snowy wilderness which, like a vast winding-sheet, seemed ready to envelope the remains of the whole army. Exhausted by fatigue, or pierced by cold, they sank by thousands on the road, casting a last look upon their comrades, and pronouncing with their dying breath the names of those most dear to them. Clouds of ravens, like the birds which are only seen at sea when a shipwreck is at hand, issued from the forests, and hovered over the dying remains of the soldiers: while troops of dogs, which had followed the army from Moscow, driven to fury by suffering, howled in the rear, and often fell upon their victims before life was extinct. The only objects that rose above the snow were the tall pines, whose gigantic stems and funereal foliage cast a darker horror over the scene,[2] and seemed destined

Dreadful depression produced thereby on the minds of the soldiers.

[2] Guil. de Vaud. 284. Segur, ii. 182. Lab. 300.

CHAP. LXVII.

to mark the grave of the army amidst the deathlike uniformity of the wilderness.

1812.

Increasing distresses of the troops.

The weight of their arms soon became intolerable to the least robust of the soldiers: their fingers frequently dropped off while holding their muskets, and the useless load was thrown aside in the struggle for the maintenance of life. Amidst the general ruin, multitudes left their ranks, and wandered on the flanks or rear of the army, where they were speedily massacred by the peasants, or made prisoners by the Cossacks. But the troops now felt the consequences of their former licentiousness: the whole country, to the breadth of seven or eight leagues on either side of the great road, had been laid waste during the advance of the army, and the exhausted soldiers were now unable to reach the limits of their former devastation. By a degree of reckless violence, also, of which it is difficult to form a conception, the first columns of the army destroyed, along the whole line of the retreat, the few remaining houses which had survived the march in summer: and the rearguard, in consequence, suffered as much from the madness of their comrades who preceded, as the hostility of their enemies who followed them: fire was before them with its ashes; winter followed them with its horrors. The horses of the cavalry and artillery, especially those which came from France and Germany, suffered dreadfully from the severity of the cold. In less than a week after it commenced, thirty thousand had perished. Caissons and cannon were abandoned at every step: the ascent from a stream, or the fall of a bridge, occasioned the abandonment of whole parks of artillery. Famished groups threw themselves upon the dead bodies of the horses to satisfy the cravings of nature;[1] and in many instances, even the repugnance

[1] Bout. ii. 198. Segur, ii. 171, 182, 183. 29th Bull. Bull. iv. 158.

of our nature at human flesh, was overcome by the pangs of protracted hunger.

1812.

Night came, but with it no diminution of the sufferings of the soldiers. Amidst the howling wilderness, the wearied men sought in vain for the shelter of a rock, the cover of a friendly habitation, or the warmth of a fire: the stems of the pine, charged with snow and hardened by frost, long resisted the flames lighted by the troops; and when, by great exertions, the fire was kindled, crowds of starving men prepared a miserable meal of rye, mixed with snow-water and horse-flesh. Sleep soon closed their eyelids, and for sixteen long hours the darkness was illuminated by the light of the bivouacs; but numbers never awoke from their slumbers; and on the following day the sites of the night-fires were marked by circles of dead bodies, with their feet still resting on the extinguished piles.[1] *

[1] Lab. 300. Segur, ii. 164. Larrey; Chir. Mil. iv. 91.

* It is seldom that cold at all comparable to that which is here described, is felt in the British Islands; but, during the great frost of spring 1838, the author was twice fortunate enough to experience it. On the 5th and 9th February in that year, the thermometer, at his residence at Possil House near Glasgow, fell, at eleven at night, to four degrees below zero of Fahrenheit; and he immediately walked out and sat down under the old trees in the park, to experience a sensation which he had long figured to himself in imagination, and might never in life feel again. A vivid recollection of the Russian retreat made him attend minutely to every object he witnessed, and every sensation he felt on the occasion. The night was bright and clear: not a speck or film obscured the firmament, where the moon shone forth in surpassing splendour; the trees, loaded with glowing crystals, glittered on all sides as in a palace of diamonds; the snow, dry and powdery, fell from the feet like the sand of the desert; not a breath waved even the feathery covering of the branches; and the mind, overpowered with the unwonted splendour of the scene, fell into a state of serene enjoyment. The sensation of the cold, even when sitting still, was hardly that of pain; the moment the body entered the external air, it felt as if plunged into a cold bath, against which it was at once evident that even the warmest clothing afforded little protection; and after resting a short time, a drowsy feeling, the harbinger of death, began to steal over the senses. When walking, however, the circulation was preserved, and

CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

Upon the great body of the soldiers the continuance of these horrors produced the usual results of recklessness, insubordination, and despair. The French soldiers, more susceptible than any others of warm impressions, early perceived the full extent of their danger, and became desperate from the accumulation of perils from which they could perceive no possibility of escaping. In the general ruin the sympathies and generous feelings of our nature were for the most part extinguished: the strong instinct of self-preservation concentrated, in these terrible moments, every one's energies on his own safety; and the catastrophes of others were unheeded, when all anticipated similar disasters for themselves. Some, however, of a firmer character, resisted the contagion, and preserved, even in the wreck of nature, the gayety and serenity of indomitable minds.[1]*

Effect of these horrors on the minds of the soldiers.

[1] Segur, ii. 184, 185, 191. Lab. 303. Fain. ii. 287. Chamb. ii. 382, 383.

In the midst of these sufferings the army arrived at Dorogobouge. The Imperial column and the corps of Davoust, after a short rest, proceeded on the road to Smolensko; while the corps of Eugene was directed to move towards the north, in order to assist Oudinot, who was severely pressed by Count Wittgenstein. Ney, with his corps, now severely weakened by the fatigues of the retreat, was still intrusted

Continuance of the retreat to Dorogobouge.

no disagreeable feeling experienced; but the astonishment felt at the moment, upon experiencing how soon repose induced drowsiness, was how, under a much severer cold, any men or horses survived in either army, during the bivouacs of the Russian retreat.

* The death produced upon almost all the soldiers who perished from the cold was the same. The persons affected fell into a state of paralytic torpor, which led them to approach the fires of the bivouacs, where they speedily fell into an apoplectic slumber, from which they never wakened. Those of the officers and men who were able to perform the whole journey, and had preserved a little sugar and coffee, resisted the cold most effectually. Mortification in particular limbs ensued in innumerable cases, against which the best preservative was found to be walking on foot.—Larrey, *Mem. de Chirurgie Militaire*, iv. 91.

with the perilous duty of protecting the rear; but he never failed in its performance,—discharging at one time the duty of an able commander, displaying at another the courage of a simple grenadier. In his reports to Napoleon, he portrayed in true colours the frightful condition of the army; but in the field he was always to be found with the rear-guard, combating with as much alacrity, though a marshal and prince of the empire, as when he was a private soldier in the revolutionary army.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 187. Bout. ii. 198.

Disasters of the Viceroy in his retreat to the same place.

The Viceroy, in advancing towards the Dwina from Dorogobouge, met with a succession of disasters. Before arriving at the banks of the Wop, he had been compelled to abandon sixty-four pieces of cannon and three thousand detached soldiers to his pursuers; but on the margin of that stream a new difficulty awaited him: the bridge which he had ordered to be constructed could not be raised, and his troops were obliged to cross the stream amidst floating masses of ice, with the water up to their middles. All the efforts of the artillerymen could not obtain a passage for the cannon, and in consequence, the whole remaining artillery and all the baggage of the corps were abandoned to the Cossacks. The bivouac of the following night was eminently disastrous: the troops, soaking with the water of the Wop, sought in vain for shelter, and multitudes perished from the freezing of wet garments round their exhausted limbs. On the snow around them was to be seen the plunder which could no longer be dragged along: the riches of Paris and Moscow lay scattered on an unknown strand, amidst the dead and the dying. This terrible night effected the total disorganization of the corps; and, to complete his misfortunes, the Viceroy, on ar-

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

riving the following day at Doukhowtchina, found that town already occupied by two regiments of Cossacks. But in these critical circumstances he did not lose his presence of mind. Forming the Italian Guard and a few squadrons of cavalry, which still preserved their horses, into a square, he attacked and carried the town; and finding that a retreat in the direction of Witepsk would expose his detached corps to certain destruction, he made in all haste for Smolensko, where he arrived with the shattered remains of his troops on the 13th November, and found the other corps of the French army already assembled.[1]

Bout. ii. 205, 207. Segur, ii. 196, 201. Lab. 308, 312.

Movements of Kutusoff in his parallel march at this time.

Meanwhile, the main Russian army, still advancing in two columns, was moving in the chord of the arc of which Napoleon was describing the curve. They advanced by Jelnia to Tchelkanowo, where the headquarters were established on the 12th, on the road leading from Smolensko to Roslawl; and thus threatened the communications of the French army, and precluded the possibility of their remaining in the former town. By following this route, Kutusoff not only got the start of his enemies, and compelled them to continue a disastrous retreat, after they hoped to have arrived at its termination; but had the immense advantage of quartering his troops under cover in the villages, in a country as yet unwasted by war, during the severity of the winter nights. The march of the army was so rapid, that several detached bodies of the French, who had not yet received orders to retreat, fell into their hands: in particular, the advanced guard of General Baraguay d'Hilliers, under Augereau, with two thousand men, were made prisoners by Count Orloff Denisoff and Colonel Davidoff,[2] who preceded the main body of

[2] Bout. ii. 201, 203. Segur, ii. 230. Chamb. ii. 391, 393.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

the army with their light troops; and a depot of one thousand three hundred men was captured at Klemenstiewo by another corps of partisans under Colonel Bistrom.

Napoleon receives intelligence of Mallet's conspiracy at Paris.

Between Dorogobouge and Smolensko Napoleon received intelligence of the conspiracy of Mallet at Paris, of which a full account will shortly be given, and by which a few daring men for a few hours gained possession of the seat of government, made prisoner the chief of the police, and had nearly overturned the Imperial government. He now perceived on what a sandy foundation his fortunes were rested, even in France itself, and exclaimed to Daru, "What if we had remained at Moscow!" From that moment his whole thoughts were concentrated on Paris; and all the disasters of his present situation could hardly withdraw his impassioned imagination from the convulsions which he anticipated in the centre of his power.[1] Segur, ii. 188, 189. Fain. ii. 285. Chamb. ii. 417, 418

Arrival of the corps at Smolensko. Nov. 9, 13.

The successive arrival of the different corps at Smolensko, where they continued to drop in from the 9th to the 13th, presented the most dismal spectacle. At the sight of the long wished-for towers, the soldiers could no longer restrain their impatience: the little remaining discipline instantly gave way, and officers and privates, infantry and cavalry, precipitated themselves in an undistinguished mass upon the gates. The famishing troops rushed into the streets, and the gates of the magazines were instantly surrounded by crowds, demanding, with earnest cries, the food which they had so long been promised. Bread, in sufficient quantities, could not be furnished: large sacks of grain were thrown out to the applicants, and the miserable soldiers fought with each other for a few pounds of dried roots or grain.[2] The[2] Segur, ii. 205, 207. Lab. 334. Fain. ii. Chamb. ii. 418, 419. Fain ii. 288.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

old and new guard alone preserved their ranks in the midst of the general confusion; and their steadiness seemed in some degree to justify that indulgence to their sufferings which excited such violent dissatisfaction among the other troops.

Efforts of Napoleon to provide magazines on his line of retreat.

The Emperor had made the greatest exertions to provide magazines along the line of his retreat. Immense quantities of provisions had been collected at Smolensko, Minsk, and Wilna: gigantic efforts had been made to transport them to the places of their destination; the roads of Germany and Italy were covered by herds of cattle and trains of waggons hastening to the theatre of war. But all these efforts were insufficient: the arrival of the convoys was retarded by the state of the roads, which the passage of so many thousand carriages had almost rendered impassable: the oxen sank under the fatigues of their lengthened marches, and the impatience of those who drove them: the stores of grain, however immense, could not suffice for the number of sick and isolated men who were left in the rear of the army, and the famished multitude who arrived from Moscow. The genius and foresight of Napoleon were not wanting: the most minute orders had been forwarded to the authorities in the rear, to provide for the wants of the army; but every thing failed, because the magnitude of his demands outstripped the bounds of human exertion.[1]

[1] Napoleon to Victor. Oct. 6, 1812. Fain. ii. 293. Segur, ii. 210, 211. Jom. iv. 180. Gourg. ii 172. Fain. ii. 273.

Disastrous intelligence from the armies on both flanks.

The intelligence which the Emperor received at Smolensko from his two flanks, would alone have been sufficient to compel his retreat to the Niemen, even if ample means of subsistence had been found for the army.[2] The secondary armies of Russia had every where resumed the offensive: the gigantic plan of Alexander for the capture of the Grand Army

[2] Jom. iv. 182. Lab. 303. Bout. ii. 254.

was rapidly advancing to maturity: the flames of Moscow had set the whole empire on fire. CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

Wittgenstein's army, having been raised, by the junction of Count Steinhill with ten thousand regular troops from Finland, the militia of St Petersburg, and some additional reinforcements from the capital, to fifty thousand men, that general resumed the offensive. Having divided his army into two columns, at the head of thirty-six thousand men, he advanced on the right bank of the Dwina against Marshal St Cyr, while Steinhill, with thirteen thousand, operated against his rear on the left bank of the river. Shut up in Polotsk, the French general had only thirty thousand men to oppose to these formidable masses. The Russian militia, incorporated with the regular army, soon acquired the discipline and hardihood of veteran soldiers. On the 18th October, being the very day on which Kutusoff attacked Murat at Winkowo, Wittgenstein advanced against Polotsk, where St Cyr occupied an intrenched camp; and an obstinate battle began along the whole line of the intrenchments. General Diebitch, who commanded the advanced guard, supported by the Russian tirailleurs, composed for the most part of militia, carried the French redoubts in the centre; while Prince Jachwill drove them under cover of the cannon of the city on the right; but on the left, the French, after a furious engagement, maintained their ground. Night put an end to the battle, and the Russians withdrew from the intrenchments which had been the scene of so much carnage. On the following morning at ten o'clock, the cannon of Count Steinhill on the left of the river gave the joyful intelligence to the Russians that they were supported; to the French, that their retreat was in danger. St Cyr immediately made dispositions for a retreat, and

Important operations of Wittgenstein on the Dwina.

Oct. 18.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

the artillery were silently drawn across the bridges; but towards night the Russians, who, during the whole day, had been establishing their batteries, perceiving the movement, opened a concentric fire on all sides upon the city. The wooden houses having been set on fire by the shells, the flames threw so bright a light around the intrenchments, that the troops fought at midnight as in full day. At two in the morning the Russians carried the ramparts, and drove the enemy with the bayonet through the burning streets. The French, nevertheless, disputed the ground so bravely, that they saved almost their whole artillery, and reached the opposite bank with the loss only of four thousand killed and wounded, and two thousand prisoners, having previously broken down the bridge over the Dwina.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 220, 223. Bout. ii. 274. Jom. iv. 182. Fain. ii. 263, 266.

Check of Steinhill, and continued successes of Wittgenstein.

The Russians in these engagements had about three thousand killed and wounded; and on the following day Count Steinhill, having been attacked by a superior force detached by St Cyr, was defeated and compelled to recross the Dwina, leaving eighteen hundred prisoners in the hands of the enemy. There appears to have been a want of concert in the movements of the Russian generals on the opposite sides of the stream. Had they attacked vigorously at the same moment, there seems no doubt, not only that the check of Count Steinhill would have been avoided, but the greater part of the French army made prisoners. It had been intended by Wittgenstein to turn the right of St Cyr, and thus cut him off from his communications with Smolensko and the Grand Army. But the difficulty of throwing bridges over the river at Goriany having rendered that design abortive, the French general retired towards Smoliantzy, where he formed a junction on the 31st October with Victor, who came to his support from

Smolensko with twenty-five thousand men. The pursuit of the Russians was retarded for several days by the difficulty of re-establishing the bridges; but they overtook them near Smoliantzy, and took eight hundred prisoners from the rearguard. Wittgenstein immediately established himself, in conformity with the plan of the campaign, on the banks of the Oula,[1] and detached a division to take possession of Witepsk, which was captured, with a slender garrison and large magazines, on the 7th November.[1]

Nov. 7. [1] Bout. ii. 275, 284. Segur, ii. 223, 227. Fain. ii. Chamb. iii.

Napoleon, alarmed by the near approach of Wittgenstein's corps, ordered Victor and Oudinot, who now had resumed the command of St Cyr's corps, to drive it back, without advancing too far from the line of the Grand Army. The Russians, perceiving the enemy's intention, took a strong position at Smoliantzy, and called in their detached columns to give battle. On the 14th the French columns began the attack, which continued with various success during the whole day; but at length, after the village of Smoliantzy had been six times taken and retaken, the French marshals, disconcerted by the heavy fire of the Russian batteries, and desirous not to risk the retreat of the Emperor by a more serious contest, withdrew from the field. The loss of each party was about three thousand men; but the success of the Russians was evinced by the retreat of their adversaries, and the re-establishment of their remaining position on the banks of the Oula.[2]

Napoleon orders Victor and Oudinot to attack Wittgenstein, which is done without success.

[2] Bout. ii. 287, 294. Jom. iv. 191.

Meanwhile Tchichagoff, having rapidly advanced from Bucharest, which he left on the 31st July, by Jassy, Chotsin, and Zaslaw, to Ostrog, effected his junction, behind the Styr, with Tormasoff, on the 14th September. Schwartzenberg, whose whole

Operations of Tchichagoff on the other flank.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

force, including Saxons and Poles, did not exceed forty-three thousand, immediately commenced his retreat; while the Russian generals, at the head of above sixty thousand men, resumed offensive operations. The Austrians fell back from the banks of the Turia to those of the Bug, with the loss, during their retreat, of two thousand killed and wounded, and five thousand prisoners. Tchichagoff having thus cleared the country of these enemies, and compelled them to fall back in the direction of Warsaw, changed the direction of his movements, and leaving to General Sacken, with a part of his army, the task of observing Schwartzenberg and preventing him from returning to the theatre of war, moved himself, with the main body of his forces, in the direction of the Beresina. Sacken was reinforced by the corps of Count Essen, which raised his force to twenty-seven thousand men; while Tchichagoff, with thirty-eight thousand men and one hundred and fifty-six pieces of cannon, moved in the direction of Minsk. He there expected to force a junction with the little army of General Ertell, who, with twelve thousand men, had maintained his ground in the neighbourhood of Bobrinsk since the beginning of the campaign; and thus bring a force of fifty thousand men to operate on the communication of the Grand Army.[1]

Sept. 14.

[1] Bout ii. 102, 112, 312. Jom. iv. 183. Chamb. ii. 399, 403.

Operations of Schwartzenberg against Sacken.

The Austrians having begun to recross the Bug with a force which reinforcements had raised to forty-five thousand men, in order to act against Sacken, the Russian general advanced to attack them in detail before their whole force was across the river. By a rapid advance, he succeeded in drawing the whole attention of Schwartzenberg upon himself, and when pressed by superior forces, took post in the vast forest of Bialswege; but the Austrian com-

mander having manœuvred with great skill and vigour, succeeded in interposing a column between him and Tchichagoff, and thereby compelled him to fall back to Bozest. The Russian general, by a happy mixture of boldness and prudence, succeeded, however, first by an offensive movement, in drawing upon himself the whole force of his adversary, nearly double his own; and then, by a skilful retreat, in withdrawing his troops, without any serious loss, in such a direction as to preclude his opponents from throwing any obstacles in the way of the decisive measures which were commencing on the Beresina.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 311, 314, 349. Fain. ii. Chamb. iii. 399, 400.

Capture of Minsk and the bridge of Borissow by Tchichagoff.

During these operations, Tchichagoff advanced with great expedition in the direction of Minsk. That town, containing the immense magazines and depots which Napoleon, during the whole summer, had been collecting for his army, was garrisoned by six thousand men, chiefly new levies, under the Polish General Bronykowski. The Russians, after destroying several smaller detachments which they met on the road, came up with and totally defeated the garrison at Kiodanow, with the loss of three thousand prisoners. The immediate consequence of this success was the capture of Minsk, on November 16, with its immense magazines, and above two thousand wounded men. By the loss of this important point, the French not only were deprived of their principal depot, but of their best line of retreat. Bronykowski fell back to the bridge of Borissow, which commanded the only remaining communication of the Grand Army. Dombrowsky, who commanded a Polish corps of eight thousand men in that quarter, instantly hastened to the defence of this important post; but notwithstanding all their efforts, the bridge, with its *tête-du-pont*, was forced on the 21st by the corps of Count Lam-

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

bert, who captured eight cannon and two thousand five hundred prisoners, besides destroying two thousand of the enemy's best troops. This decisive blow gave the Russians the command of the only remaining bridge over the Beresina, and seemed to render the escape of Napoleon a matter of absolute impossibility. At the same time Count Chernitcheff, who had been detached by Tchichagoff, to open a communication with Wittgenstein, succeeded, after extraordinary exertions and by a long detour, in reaching the headquarters of that enterprising commander. In crossing the great road from Smolensko to Warsaw, he had the singular good fortune to fall in with and liberate General Winzingerode, who was moving as a prisoner towards the French dominions.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 331. Fain. ii. 326, 329. Chamb. iii. 403, 405.

Partial completion of the plan for surrounding Napoleon. Nov.

In this way the gigantic plan formed by the Russians for the destruction of Napoleon's army approached its accomplishment. The forces of Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff, drawn from the opposite extremities of Europe, had successfully reached their destined points; the lines of the Oula and of the Beresina were guarded by seventy thousand men; Minsk with its vast magazines, Borissow with its fortified bridge, were in the hands of the Russians; while Napoleon, with the shattered remains of his army, was still engaged with the whole forces of Kutusoff in the neighbourhood of Smolensko. The plan so ably traced by the cabinet of St Petersburg had, nevertheless, not been fully carried into execution. Instead of seventy, they had calculated on one hundred and twenty thousand being assembled in the rear of the Grand Army; and the armies of the Russian commanders, though approaching, were not in such close proximity as to be able to support each other in case of danger. The principal causes

of this disappointment were the non-arrival of General Ertell, who had failed to join Tchichagoff with his troops, and the disasters which had reduced to one-half the corps of Count Steinhill. Nevertheless, the force in his rear, such as it was, would have rendered the escape of any part of the French army altogether desperate to any other commander than Napoleon.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 349, 350. Chamb. iii. 12, 26. Fain. ii. 328, 329.

The French Emperor, perceiving from the exhausted state of the magazines, the loss of Polotsk, and the advance of Tchichagoff, that a protracted stay at Smolensko was impossible, prepared for a continuance of his retreat. The remains of the cavalry, reduced from forty thousand who crossed the Niemen to eight hundred, were formed into one body, and placed under the orders of Latour Maubourg; the shattered battalions blended into separate corps; and the Emperor, putting himself at the head of the old guard, set out from Smolensko on the 14th. His troops amounted to nearly seventy thousand men; but of this body not more than forty thousand were in such a state of organization as to be capable of offensive operations. They had already lost three hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; but nearly two hundred and fifty were still dragged along, destined erelong to augment the long catalogue of the victors' trophies.[2]

Alarmed by these disasters, Napoleon resolves to retire from Smolensko to the Niemen.

[2] Segur, ii. 235, 237. Bout. ii. 208, 237, 239.

Kutusoff, continuing his parallel march, had already arrived in the neighbourhood of Krasnoi with his whole army, excepting the Cossacks under Platoff; but it did not now exceed fifty thousand men. Thirty thousand soldiers had been left behind during the rapid march from Malo-Jaroslawitz from fatigue and the severity of the weather, which affected the Russian troops even *more* than those from the south

Arrival of Kutusoff at Krasnoi.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

of Europe. The Russian soldiers had the advantage of the French in the enthusiasm of success, in having marched over an unwasted country, in having preserved a greater number of their artillery horses, and in not *ultimately* losing the men who fell behind; but the cold of winter was as severe upon them as upon the invaders; and the diminution of their ranks for present operations was fully as great as that of their adversaries.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 232. Larrey, iv. 111, 112.

Order of the French retreat from Smolensko.

Nov. 14.

The French troops marched, as on the previous part of the retreat, in successive columns; the Emperor, with the old and new guard, came first, next that of the Viceroy, then Davoust, while Ney still continued to bring up the rear. On the 14th the old guard occupied Krasnoi. Kutusoff having brought up the greater part of his army to the neighbourhood of the great road early on the morning of the 15th, opened a heavy fire of artillery on the French guards, while Milaradowitch crossed the great road, and drove back the heads of the advancing columns. In the night, however, Napoleon attacked the Russians with the best divisions of the young guard, and succeeded in clearing the route to Krasnoi; and on the following morning the Emperor himself passed the dangerous part of the road in the midst of the old guard. Kutusoff, fearful to encounter that formidable body, withdrew his troops from the road, and harassed their march only by a distant cannonade. The veterans closed their ranks round their monarch as they passed the Russian batteries, and played in the hottest of the fire the celebrated air,—"*Ou peut on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?*" "Say, rather," exclaimed the Emperor, "let us watch over the safety of the Empire."[2]

[2] Segur, ii. 242, 244, 245. Bout. ii. 208, 210. Fain. ii. 202. Gourg. ii. 202.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

In truth, on this occasion, as during the whole remainder of the retreat, the French army owed their safety chiefly to the circumstance that the Russian generals were far from being aware of the miserable condition to which their antagonists were reduced; and took their measures to resist the Grand Army, when, in truth, it was only the skeleton of that awful array which was before them; and by a more vigorous onset they might, in all probability, have effected its entire destruction. This illusion, so natural from the heroic deeds of the French army, was increased by the circumstance that, in several intercepted despatches from Berthier to the marshals of the army, which fell into the hands of the Russians, he spoke of different corps of the armies as if they still existed in considerable strength, when, in fact, they were little better than shadows. The imagination could not conceive the extent of disaster which had befallen the French army; the remembrance of its deeds still affected the minds of men; and Napoleon was still the mighty conqueror at the head of the Grand Army, when, in truth, he could not collect thirty thousand men around his standards in a condition to face the enemy.[1]

Impression the name of Napoleon still produced on the minds of men.

[1] Chamb. iii. 91.

No sooner had the guard passed, than Kutusoff made his dispositions to block up the road, and cut off the corps of the Viceroy. Prince Dolgorucki, with his corps, was placed astride upon the great road fronting Smolensko, while General Raeffskoi was established parallel to its line to take the advancing columns in flank. Eugene, after passing a miserable night round the fires of his bivouac, was advancing slowly on foot along the road in the middle of his staff, when he was met by an officer of Milaradowitch, who summoned him to surrender.

Successful attack on Eugene's corps.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

The French general Guyon, the sole survivor of his brigade, instantly repelled the insulting proposal; but immediately the heads of the column were arrested by a shower of cannon-shot; the hills on the left of the road were seen bristling with armed men, and a fence of levelled bayonets closed the front. Far from being dismayed by so fearful a spectacle, the brave Eugene, worthy of the crown which he wore, formed his troops into three divisions, and advanced with firmness to attack the Russian batteries; but the French squares in vain strove to cut their way through the hostile ranks: their battalions melted away under the fire of the grape-shot, while numerous squadrons poured down from the eminences on the left to destroy the scattered columns. Finding it impracticable to force his way along the great road, the Viceroy placed himself and the royal guard at the head of his best troops; and while the enemy were actively engaged on the left, defiled across the fields during the obscurity of evening, and joined the Emperor at Krasnoi. In this affair he lost twenty-two hundred prisoners, a still greater number killed, one eagle, and eighteen pieces of cannon; but he saved the honour of his corps by his intrepidity and skill.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 250, 255. Lab. 347, 352. Bout. ii. 212, 214. Fain. ii. 304, 305. Chamb. iii. 441, 444.

Arrangements for cutting off Davoust as he passed.

Encouraged by this success, Kutusoff resolved, on the 17th, to bring his whole force to bear upon the remaining corps of Davoust and the guards. For this purpose, he divided his army into three columns: the first, under the orders of General Tormasoff, who had been called to the main army since the death of Bagrathion, was destined to advance towards the great road beyond Krasnoi in the direction of Orcha, so as to threaten the communications of Napoleon, and prevent him from sending succour to his distressed

lieutenants; the second, commanded by Prince Gallitzin, received orders to move upon Krasnoi, and attack the enemy in front; while the third, under the orders of Milaradowitch, was commanded to allow the corps of Davoust to defile along the road towards Krasnoi, till the whole body was past, and then fall upon his rear. In this manner, he hoped that the corps of Davoust and the guards, pressed together, and attacked in front and on both flanks at the same time, would be thrown into disorder and destroyed.[1] CHAP. LXVII. 1812. Bout. ii. 215, 217.

Napoleon, feeling the necessity of making an effort to disengage that marshal from his perilous situation, prolonged his stay on the 17th at Krasnoi, and accepted the combat. Before daylight the divisions of Roguet of the guard surprised and defeated a Russian detachment in the village of Ojarowski: a success of great importance, by the circumspection which it produced in the Russian commander. He drew up his troops in two lines fronting the Russian centre, with their right resting on the town of Krasnoi, and their left on the ravine of the Lossmina. At daybreak the Emperor set out from Krasnoi on foot, in the direction of Smolensko, to lend his aid to Davoust, who was coming up. On seizing his sword, he exclaimed, "I have long enough acted emperor: now is the moment to resume the general."[2] Napoleon's heroic resolution to support Davoust. Segur, ii. 256, 262. Bout. ii. 217. Gourg. ii. 97. Chamb. ii. 491.

The action commenced by Prince Gallitzin, with the Russian centre, attacking General Roguet and the young guard. After an obstinate conflict, in the course of which a square of the Imperial guard was broken and destroyed by the Russian cuirassiers, the Russians established themselves on the banks of the Lossmina, near the centre of the French position. At the same time, the corps of Davoust, which had Battle of Krasnoi. Nov. 17.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

been suffered to pass by Milaradowitch, appeared in sight, slowly moving on in the midst of a cloud of Cossacks, which enveloped its ranks. The position of Napoleon was now in the highest degree critical. In front, on the right and left, the horizon was flaming with the enemy's fire; Krasnoi was speedily filled by a crowd of fugitives from the centre and Davoust's corps, which could no longer maintain their ground against Prince Gallitzin and the increasing force of Milaradowitch, which pressed on from the south and east. At this dreadful moment, if the corps of Tormasoff had appeared on the road to the right, between Krasnoi and Liady, there seems no doubt that the whole French army would either have been compelled to surrender, or driven back upon the Dnieper, and lost in the marshes and forests which border that deserted stream. But Kutusoff, having discovered that the Emperor with his guards was in Krasnoi, delayed the march of his left wing till eleven o'clock, so as to give the guards and Mortier time to defile towards Liady, before Tormasoff crossed the road—overawed, it would appear, by the thoughts of driving to desperation so great a conqueror, or desirous of securing, without loss to himself, the destruction of the corps of Davoust. The consequence was, that Napoleon, with the half of his guards who had survived the battle, retired in safety to Liady, while Prince Gallitzin carried by assault the village of Krasnoi; and the corps of Davoust, severely pressed in rear by the troops of Milaradowitch, and cut in two by the advanced guard of Tormasoff, which at length arrived at its ground, was almost totally destroyed.[1] In this battle, the Russians took above six thousand prisoners, forty-five pieces of cannon, two standards,

Bout. ii. 218, 223, 224. Segur, ii. 264, 275. Fain. ii. 306, 307. Chamb. ii. 445, 449.

and an immense quantity of baggage, among which were the batoft of Marshal Davoust and part of the archives of Napoleon.

Meanwhile, the corps of Marshal Ney, which brought up the rear, left Smolensko on the morning of the 17th, after blowing up part of the ramparts. On their route they speedily saw traces of the ruin of the Grand Army; cannon, caissons, dead horses, wounded men, arrested their progress at every step, amidst a tremendous cold and an unusual accumulation of snow. Kutusoff, informed of the situation of this corps by the papers of the Emperor found at Krasnoi, prepared for his reception. The army was established in two columns on the great road, facing both ways, in order to prevent any attempt at a rescue by the French troops who had got on towards Liady, while a body of cavalry was detached to prevent him defiling by the right of the great road. The French columns, ignorant of their danger, approached on the 18th, under cover of a thick fog, the banks of the Lossmina, strewed with the bodies of their comrades, when they were suddenly assailed by repeated discharges of grape-shot from forty pieces of cannon; while the whole heights on their front and flank appeared crested by dense black columns of infantry and artillery, ranged in order of battle. To a proposition for a capitulation, the intrepid Ney replied, "A marshal of France never surrenders!" and instantly forming his columns of attack, advanced with the utmost heroism against the Russian batteries. His soldiers, worthy of their immortal commander, closed their ranks, and marched with hopeless devotion against the iron bands of their adversaries; but after a fruitless action, and the loss of half their

Imminent danger and heroic conduct of Ney.

CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

numbers, they were thrown into disorder, and driven back to a considerable distance from the field of battle, with the loss of three thousand five hundred prisoners, and above two thousand killed. The marshal, perceiving that the enemy's position could not be forced in front, and that they were extending to the north of the great road, to prevent him from escaping, as Prince Eugene had done, formed a body of four thousand out of the most efficient of his troops, and with these retired for an hour on the road to Smolensko, when he suddenly turned to the north, and moved towards the Dnieper. The severity of the cold had frozen part of the course of that river: at the village of Syrokenie, his advanced posts fell in with a peasant who conducted them to a point where the passage was practicable, and he succeeded, during the night, in transporting three thousand, without horses or artillery, over the fragile ice, to the opposite shore. He even waited three hours on the bank before venturing across the river, to give time for his stragglers to join his little detachment; and during this anxious period, the heroic marshal, wrapped in his cloak, slept quietly on the margin of the stream. The remainder of his corps, amounting to eight thousand five hundred, with twenty-seven pieces of cannon, and the whole baggage of the corps, fell into the hands of the Russians. In the morning of the 19th, a column of two thousand five hundred men was surrounded by the Russian cavalry in the neighbourhood of Winnyia-Louki, and made prisoners; and the remnant of Marshal Ney's corps was assailed by the Cossacks, who had come from Smolensko along the north bank of the river, and compelled to abandon three hundred prisoners and ten pieces of cannon.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 225, 229. Segur, ii. 288, 292, 300. Fain. ii. 310, 312. Chamb. ii. 462, 473.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

The result of the actions on the 16th, 17th, and 18th, besides one hundred and twelve pieces of cannon abandoned near Smolensko, was the capture of twenty-six thousand prisoners, three hundred officers, and one hundred and sixteen pieces of cannon, and ten thousand killed or drowned; with the loss to the Russians of only two thousand men. The history of the revolutionary wars can afford no parallel to such a success achieved at so small a sacrifice to the victorious party. Napoleon himself bore testimony to the ability with which the manœuvres on his flank had been conducted.[1] The skill of the Russian movements is the more to be admired, because, with a force inferior upon the whole to their antagonists, they were always superior at the point of attack. Napoleon left Smolensko with seventy thousand men, of whom one-half were still efficient: Kutusoff arrived at Krasnoi with only fifty thousand, nearly as much debilitated by suffering as their opponents.* It must, however, be admitted, that the caution of the Russian commander, however praiseworthy on former occasions, was misplaced on the 18th at Krasnoi: the Russians there, though not superior in number to their antagonists,[2] were supported by all the excitation of victory, while successive disasters had sunk the spirit of the French; and the chance of capturing Napoleon, or even his principal generals, was worth purchasing at the hazard even of a defeat to a corps of the army.[2]

General results of the battles of Krasnoi.

[1] Segur, ii. 278.

[2] Bout. ii. 232. Gourg. ii. 215. Chamb. ii. 448, 449. Fain. ii. 308, 313.

Although the Emperor and part of the army had escaped this imminent danger at Krasnoi, yet it was a painful sight for his officers to behold the straits to which he was reduced, and the utter dis-

Horrible confusion which reigned in the French army.

* "The Russian army was as much weakened by stragglers, sick, and the cold, as the French; but it had the great advantage in the end of not losing those left behind."—FAIN. ii. 313.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

organization which pervaded every part of the army. The horses having all perished, or been reserved by the Emperor's orders for the wounded, Napoleon himself marched on foot, with a birch stick in his hand, to avoid falling on the icy roads, surrounded by a body of officers who still preserved some sort of regularity of appearance; but it was with extreme difficulty that they could force their way through the crowd of straggling soldiers, baggage-waggons, chariots, cannon, and camp followers, who, pell-mell and in utter confusion, crowded the roads in the most frightful disorder. Nothing but the devotion of the officers who surrounded him, preserved any sort of order in this disorganized multitude; but their efforts were incessant to watch over the safety of the Emperor, and thus succeeded in bringing him safely through the frightful confusion with which he was surrounded.[1]

[1] Dumas, Souv. iii. 467. Larrey, iv. 94. Chamb. ii. 447, 448.

Heroic conduct of Ney during his retreat

Ney was severely harassed by Platoff in his retreat, after crossing the Dnieper. For above twenty leagues he marched in the midst of six thousand of these Scythians, who hovered incessantly round his wearied columns. "On one occasion, the Cossacks got the start of his advanced troops; and the sudden apparition of flashes of artillery in the midst of the darkness of the forest, announced that they were surrounded by their enemies. The bravest fell back in dismay, and gave themselves up for lost; but the marshal, with admirable presence of mind, ordered the charge to be beat, and exclaimed, "Comrades, now is the moment; forward, they are ours!" At these words, the surprised soldiers, imagining that the enemy were cut off, resumed their courage, and the Cossacks, dreading an overthrow, fled in confusion. At length, after undergoing innumerable hardships, the heroic commander brought the rem-

nant of his corps, hardly amounting to fifteen hundred armed men, to the neighbourhood of Orcha; and the Emperor, who heard with the utmost joy of their approach, sent the Viceroy's corps to their assistance, which enabled them to rejoin in safety the other corps of the army. Napoleon exclaimed, "I have three hundred millions in my coffers in the Tuileries: I would willingly have given them to save Marshal Ney!" [1]

1812.

[1] Gourg. ii. 116. Segur, ii. 308, 310. Bout. ii. 235. Fain. ii. 324, 325.

The whole French army was now assembled near Orcha; but they exhibited a miserable skeleton of the Grand Army. Out of thirty-five thousand of the guard there remained only six thousand; but they were in tolerable condition, and had preserved their artillery. Davoust had only saved four thousand out of seventy thousand; Eugene, eighteen hundred out of forty-two thousand; Ney, fifteen hundred out of forty thousand. The marshals vainly attempted to re-establish order, and established gendarmes to arrest the stragglers, and bring them back to their standards: the punishment of death had lost its terrors to men who expected only a few hours of life. [2]

Prodigious losses of the French army.

[2] Segur, ii. 276, 274. Chamb. ii. 445.

The severity of the weather abated at Orcha; to the intense frost of the preceding fortnight succeeded a thaw, which rendered the bivouacs at night less intolerable; magazines in abundance were formed in the town, and a park of artillery supplied the losses of the corps in that essential particular. The garrison of the town and the Polish cavalry in the neighbourhood were joined to the army. Kutusoff, finding that, during the delay occasioned by the action with Marshal Ney's corps, the remains of the French army had gained the start of him by several marches, resolved to relinquish the pursuit to his advanced guard, and give the main body some repose. [3] For

Cessation of the frost, and discontinuance of the pursuit by Kutusoff.

[3] Bout. ii. 235. Gourg. ii. 112. Segur, ii. 273, 274.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

this purpose he moved his headquarters, by easy marches, to Kopys on the Dnieper, leaving to Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff the task of completing the destruction of the French army.

Napoleon's hazardous situation and plans.

Napoleon's first intention was to join his forces to those of Victor and Oudinot, and, with their united force, fall upon Wittgenstein, and force his way across the Oula, on the direct road to Wilna. But the excessive difficulty of the roads in that direction, leading through forests and morasses, which offered no resources for the army, and the experienced strength of the Russian position at Smolensko, having compelled him to abandon that design, he moved direct upon the Beresina. On the road he received the disastrous intelligence, first, of the capture of Minsk, and then of the bridge of Borissow, by Tchichagoff's army: the only passage over the river was now in the enemy's hands, while the sudden thaw had broken up its wintry covering, and filled the stream with fragments of floating ice, which rendered it apparently impossible to re-establish a communication with the opposite shore. In front was Tchichagoff, guarding the stream with thirty thousand men; on the right, Wittgenstein in an impregnable position; on the left, Kutusoff with the main Russian army.[1]

[1] Jom. iv. 192, 195, 196. Segur, ii. 323, 326. Bout. ii. 352. Fain. ii. 327, 328.

His admirable arrangements for bursting through.

In these critical circumstances the Emperor displayed his usual genius and firmness of mind. Far from despairing of his fortunes, he resolved to accumulate his force, and overwhelm the army of Moldavia, which obstructed the direct line of his return to Europe. For this purpose he strengthened his army with the corps of Victor, Oudinot, and Dombrowski, and all the detachments which he could collect in the neighbourhood, and, placing the corps of Oudinot in front, and that of Victor in the rear,

set out on his perilous march. By concentrating his whole force in this manner, he presented an imposing mass of seventy thousand combatants; for, though the remains of the Grand Army, reinforced by the wreck of Dombrowski's corps, did not exceed twenty thousand men, the united army of Victor and Oudinot brought an accession of fifty thousand troops, with all their artillery and appointments in good order, and the united artillery of the army amounted to two hundred and fifty pieces. After making every allowance for the disorganization of a part of this force, there can be no doubt that Napoleon had at his disposal a body of forty thousand combatants, perfectly armed, and in a condition to fight; that they were supported by a powerful train of artillery, and that all were penetrated by the conviction that their only chance of safety lay in their own courage and resolution.[1]

[1] Compare Bout. ii. 355, 362. Gourg. ii. 128 and 158. Jom. iv. 196. Chamb. iii. 49, 50. Fain. ii. 397. Tchichagoff, 44, 47.

To oppose this still formidable force, Tchichagoff had only at his disposal thirty-three thousand men, of which one-third was cavalry, nearly unserviceable in the marshy shores and wooded banks of the Beresina; and his artillery did not exceed one hundred and fifty pieces. He had no chance, therefore, of opposing the passage of the river by main force; but the real danger of Napoleon consisted in this, that he might fall with superior numbers upon the French advanced guard before the main body could come across to their assistance, or, by destroying the bridge over the marshes on the road to Timbue, render their further progress impracticable even after passing the stream, or delay it till the approach of Wittgenstein endangered the whole army.[2]

Force which Tchichagoff had to oppose him.

[2] Gourg. ii. 143. Bout. 402, 403. Tchichagoff's Narrative. 45, 46.

The advanced guard of Tchichagoff, advancing beyond the bridge of Borissow, in order to approach Wittgenstein's corps, was met on the 23d by the

CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

vanguard of Oudinot, and totally defeated, with the loss of above one thousand men. His troops, in consequence, repassed the river in the utmost confusion; but they had the presence of mind to destroy the bridge of Borissow in their flight. This circumstance still exposed Napoleon to the difficulty of throwing a bridge and crossing the river in the face of the enemy's army: a difficulty which was not diminished by the intelligence, that on the same day Wittgenstein had fallen on his rearguard under Victor, and made fifteen hundred prisoners. The corps of Victor, in consequence, was thrown back upon the centre of the army, under Napoleon in person. They met suddenly in the middle of a pine forest, and Victor's men then beheld, for the first time, the ghastly remains of that once splendid army traversing the wood more like a troop of captives than a body of armed men. The squalid looks of the soldiers; the silent tread and sunk visages of the men; their long beards and smoke-besmeared countenances; the vast numbers of officers and generals marching without troops, promiscuously with the common men; the extraordinary dresses of the army, composed of women's pelisses, old carpets, or torn cloaks, threw the troops of Victor, who had been kept ignorant of the disasters of the Grand Army, into consternation; and disorder, the most contagious of all maladies, began rapidly to spread through the ranks.[1]

Breaking down of the bridge of Borissow, and junction of Napoleon and Victor.

Nov. 23.

[1] Segur. ii. 332, 333. Bout. ii. 356, 357. Chamb. iii. 12, 13.

To conceal his real intention, Napoleon made demonstrations towards the Lower Beresina, as if his design was to cross there, and unite his forces to those of Schwartzenberg. He even went so far as to make considerable preparations for a bridge nearly opposite Brillin that quarter. Meanwhile, the main body of his forces were collected on the heights of

Napoleon's measure to deceive the enemy as to his real point of passage.

Borissow; and finding that his demonstrations had attracted the whole attention of the enemy to the lower part of the river, he began, under cover of a battery of forty pieces, to throw two bridges, on the night of the 25th, over the stream, nearly opposite to Studienka. A severe frost, which set in on the 24th, facilitated the approach of the artillery and caissons to the river, over the marshy meadows which lined its sides: but this fortunate circumstance redoubled the difficulty of forming the bridges, by reason of the floating ice which was brought down by its waves. But nothing could arrest the French engineers. With heroic devotion, the corps of sappers threw themselves into the river, with the water up to their shoulders; while the cavalry of General Corbineau swam across the stream to drive back the Russian detachments which were beginning to collect on the opposite shore. The enemy were defeated; and the bridge for infantry being at length completed by the incredible exertions of General Eblé, and the French engineers, a brigade of infantry was soon transported in safety to the opposite shore.[1]

Nov. 24.

Nov. 25.

[1] Jom. iv. 197, 198. Bout. ii. 366, 367. Gourg. ii. 142. Fain. ii. 375, 376. Chamb. iii. 47, 49.

By a singular piece of fortune, General Tchaplitz, who commanded the Russian troops on the western side of the river, had been recalled by Tchichagoff, on that very night, to the Lower Beresina, to resist the attack which was anticipated in that quarter. In the morning of the 26th, the French, who had passed a sleepless night, watching the Russian forces, beheld with astonishment their bivouacs deserted, and their batteries in retreat, at the very time that the bridge was beginning to acquire consistency. Tchaplitz, who was soon informed of the passage, made all haste to return, but he found the advanced guard so firmly established, that it was impossible to dislodge them from their position. Another

The first part of the army surprise the passage.

Nov. 26.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

bridge was speedily completed for the passage of the carriages and artillery: fifty pieces of cannon, besides the artillery of the whole corps, defiled in a short time to the western bank; the whole of Oudinot's corps was transported across; and the Russians being driven back to the thickets, at a distance from the river, Napoleon found himself master of the important defiles that lead to Zembin, and the passage for his army secured.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 367, 368. Gourg. ii. 142. Segur, ii. 344.

Tchichagoff's measure on hearing of the passage.

During these critical operations, Tchichagoff, with the main body of his forces, lay inactive at Chabachwiezi, obstinately adhering to his opinion that the serious attempt was to be made on the lower part of the river. He even adhered to this opinion *after he heard* of the passage having commenced at Studienka, conceiving that that operation was only a feint to withdraw his attention from the real intentions of the Emperor. But being at length convinced, by repeated advices from Tchaplitz, that the passage was seriously going forward at that point, he made all haste to march his troops in that direction; while Wittgenstein having received intelligence that the French were escaping over the river, attempted to march straight to Studienka, in order to destroy the rearguard on the left bank; but the state of the roads rendering that project impracticable, he was compelled to move to Staroi-Borissow. In this way he hoped either to cut off Victor, if he had not yet passed that place, or to follow him up in the direction of Studienka, if he had anticipated his movement.[2]

Nov. 27.

[2] Bout ii. 363, 371. Jom. iv. 197, 198. Fain. ii. 380, 382. Chamb. iii. 52, 53.

The corps of Victor was extended along the left bank of the Beresina, as far as Borissow, which was occupied by General Partonneaux with a strong division. During the whole of the 27th the passage of the army continued, while Victor's corps gradually

drew nearer to the bridge; but the division of Partonneaux, which formed his rearguard, was commanded by Napoleon not to leave Borissow and move upon Staroi-Borissow till six in the evening. The consequence was, that before he could reach the latter town, Wittgenstein's army was firmly established across the great road, with his front facing the line by which alone the French could approach. Partonneaux, finding his progress interrupted by so formidable a force, attempted to cut his way through; but his troops being defeated with great loss in their attempt, and finding their retreat to Borissow cut off by Platoff, who had come up with his Cossacks, was compelled to capitulate with seven thousand men, including eight hundred cavalry in the best condition. He himself endeavoured, with four hundred men, to elude his pursuers during the obscurity of the night; but after wandering some hours in the dark through the snowy desert, and finding every outlet blockaded by the enemy's fires, he was obliged to lay down his arms.[1]

Capture of Partonneaux's division by Wittgenstein. Nov. 27.

[1] Segur, ii. 354, 357. Bout ii. 371, 374. Fain. ii. 405, 467. Chamb iii. 60, 61.

On the same day General Yermoloff, with the advanced guard of Kutusoff's army, arrived at Borissow, and a bridge of pontoons having been established by Tchichagoff, his corps was instantly passed over to reinforce the army of Moldavia on the right bank; and the Russian generals having met from Moscow, Finland, and Bucharest, at Borissow on the night of the 27th, concerted measures for a general attack on the French army on both sides of the river for the following day. Tchichagoff, supported by Yermoloff, was to assail Oudinot and the French main body on the right bank, while Wittgenstein pressed upon Victor, and threw back his corps upon the bridge of Studienka.[2]

Preparations for a general attack on the French on both sides of the river.

[2] Bout ii. 375. Segur, ii. 363. Jom. iv. 201. Fain. ii.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

Tchaplitz began the action on the morning of the 28th, by a spirited attack on the corps of Marshal Oudinot; but the French vanguard having been successively reinforced by the remains of Ney's corps, the legion of the Vistula, and the Imperial guard, the Russians, after an obstinate conflict, were compelled to give way, with the loss of twelve hundred prisoners.

The French force their way through Tchichagoff's corps.

Nov. 28.

The French cuirassiers charged with so much impetuosity, that the day would have been irretrievably lost, if Tchaplitz had not bravely thrown himself upon the victorious squadron at the head of the Russian hussars; and Tchichagoff having at length brought up the main body of his forces, the battle was restored: but it was too late for decisive success: the road to Zembin was secured, traversing for some hundred yards defiles through the marshes where the narrow road was laid on wood, which might have been burned, and the retreat of the French entirely stopped; and during the action the guard and the corps of Davoust defiled in that direction. The battle continued in the wood between Brill and Stackhow with inconceivable fury till midnight; the French fighting with the courage of despair, the Russians with the ardent desire to complete the destruction of their enemies. The loss was nearly equal on both sides; that of the French amounted to nearly five thousand in killed and wounded.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 378. Jom. iv. 201. Tchichagoff. Fain ii. 395, 400.

While this was going forward on the right bank, Wittgenstein commenced a vigorous attack on the corps of Victor, now severely weakened by the loss of Partonneaux's division. After a severe struggle, General Diebitch established a battery of twelve pieces so far in advance as to command the bridge, and the confused crowd of soldiers, chariots, and baggage-

Furious attack of Wittgenstein on the troops on the left bank.

waggons which was assembled in its vicinity, and soon the balls from his guns began to fall among them. A dreadful tumult instantly commenced, and the whole crowd rushed towards the bridges, crushing each other in their flight, and blockading the passage by their efforts to get over. As the Russian corps successively gained ground, their batteries formed a vast semicircle, which played incessantly on the bridges till night, and augmented to desperation the terror of the multitudes who were struggling at their entrance. In the midst of the confusion, the artillery-bridge broke, and the crowd who were upon it, pushed forward by those behind, were precipitated into the water, and perished miserably. Infantry, cavalry, and artillery, now rushed promiscuously to the other bridge, which was speedily choked up; through the frantic crowd, the caissons and cannon were urged forward with unpitiable fury, ploughing their way, like the car of Jaggernaut, through the dead and the dying, while the weaker were every where pushed into the stream; and thousands perished amidst the masses of ice which were floating on its waves.[1]

Segur, ii. 367, 368. Lab. 393. Bout. ii. 379, 380. Chamb. iii. 65, 66. Fain. ii. 400.

In these moments of hopeless agony, all the varieties of character were exposed naked to view. Selfishness there exhibited all its baseness, and cowardice its meanness; while heroism seemed clothed with supernatural power, and generosity cast a lustre over the character of humanity. Soldiers seized infants from their expiring mothers, and vowed to adopt them as their own: officers harnessed themselves in the sledges, to extricate their wounded comrades; privates threw themselves on the snow beside their dying officers, and exposed themselves to captivity or death to solace their last moments.[2] Mothers were seen lifting their children above their heads in

Generous devotion shown by many at this awful passage.

[2] Segur, ii. 368, 371. Lab. 393. Segur, ii. 389. Chamb. iii. 71

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

the water, raising them as they sunk, and even holding them aloft for some moments after they themselves were buried in the waves. An infant abandoned by its mother near the gate of Smolensko, and adopted by the soldiers, was saved, by their care, from the horrors of the Beresina; it was again saved at Wilna, on the bridge of Kowno, and it finally escaped all the horrors of the retreat.

Frightful scenes when the bridges were broken.

It was in the midst of this terrific scene that the rearguard of Marshal Victor, which had nobly sustained, during the whole day, the arduous duty of protecting the passage, arrived at the entrance of the bridge. His troops, with stern severity, opened a passage for themselves through the helpless multitude, and in vain endeavoured to persuade them to pass over to the opposite shore. Despair and misery had rendered them incapable of the exertion. At length, as morning dawned, and the Russian troops approached, the rearguard were drawn across the bridge, which was set on fire. A frightful cry now rose from the multitude on the opposite bank, who awakened too late to the horrors of their situation; numbers rushed over the burning bridge, and to avoid the flames plunged into the waves; while thousands wandered in hopeless misery along the shore, and beheld their last hopes expire with the receding columns of their countrymen. When the ice dissolved in spring, the magnitude of the disaster became manifest; twelve thousand dead bodies were found on the shores of the river.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 373. Bout. ii. 383, 386. Jom. iv. 203. Fain. ii. 408, 409. Chamb. iii. 71. Lab. 395.

Results of this dreadful passage.

Such was the dreadful passage of the Beresina—glorious to the French arms, yet how fatal! The talent of the Emperor, the firmness of the soldiers, was never more strongly exemplified; but it completed the ruin of the Grand Army. Twenty-five pieces of cannon, sixteen thousand prisoners, and

above twelve thousand slain, were the price at which the passage was purchased. The corps of Victor and Oudinot were reduced to the deplorable state of the troops who had come from Moscow; the army no longer preserved the appearance of military order, but a confused mass of fifty thousand men marched in detached groups along the road to Wilna. CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

To complete the disaster, the frost, which for some days had been comparatively mild, set in on the 30th with increased severity. The general disorder now reached its height: the horses of Victor and Oudinot's corps, and all those which had been collected on the retreat, shared the fate of those which had accompanied the Grand Army: the artillery was gradually abandoned; the cavalry melted away; and Marshal Ney with difficulty could collect three thousand men on foot to form the rearguard, and protect the helpless multitude from the attacks of Platoff and his indefatigable Cossacks. For some days Victor shared with him the post of danger; and by their incessant exertions successive rearguards were formed, which rapidly disappeared under the severity of the weather or the attacks of the enemy. Tchaplitz and Platoff continued to press the rearguard, and, on the 4th December, captured twenty-four cannons and two thousand five hundred prisoners. In the midst of the general ruin, a guard, called the "Sacred Squadron," was formed of officers, to surround and protect the Emperor. The gentlemen who composed it discharged with heroic fidelity the duty assigned to them, and executed, without murmuring, all the duties of common soldiers; but the severity of the cold soon destroyed their horses, and the Emperor, in the midst of his faithful followers, was obliged to march on foot through the

Dreadful disorders which now ensued in the retreat.

Dec. 4.

CHAP. LXVII.

1812.

snow. At night, the bivouac was formed in the middle of the still unbroken squares of the Old Guard. These brave men sat round the watch-fires on their haversacks, with their elbows on their knees, their heads resting on their hands, and seated close together; striving by this posture to repress the pangs of hunger, and gather additional warmth by resting on each other.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 375, 379, 389. Jom. iv. 188. 29th Bull. Bout. ii. 391. Lab. 398. Gourg. ii. 132.

Napoleon leaves the army for Paris.

On the 5th, Napoleon arrived at Smorgoni. He there collected his marshals around him, dictated the famous 29th bulletin, which fully developed the horrors of the retreat, explained his reasons for immediately returning to Paris, and, after bidding them all an affectionate farewell, set out in a sledge at ten at night for the French capital, accompanied by Caulaincourt and Lobau, leaving the command of the army to Murat.[2]

[2] Segur, ii. 393, 394. Gourg. ii. 176.

Sufferings of Poland during the campaign.

During the time that this long course of disasters was befalling the Grand Army, Warsaw and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had been he victims of the most uninterrupted suffering. Great as was the spirit of the people, and ardent their desire to regain their national independence, and throw off the hated yoke of Russia, they had yet sunk under the enormous burdens imposed upon them by the continual passage of the troops, and the enormous requisitions of the French emperor. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw, though possessing only a population of little more than four millions of souls, had already, during the campaign, furnished eighty-five thousand men to the Grand Army, and their swords had drunk as deep of the Russian blood as those of any troops in the vast array, both at Smolensko and Borodino. This supply of men, great as it was, however, was far from keeping pace with the gigantic conceptions of Napoleon; and the Polish battalions were so com-

pletely lost in the immense multitude of armed men by whom they were surrounded; that Napoleon frequently complained that he had never seen any Poles at all in his army. Nevertheless, situated as the Grand Duchy was, it was truly surprising how its inhabitants had been capable of making the efforts which they actually did. The pay of the troops had long since ceased; the Government, deeply in debt, was unable to borrow money from any of the capitalists in Europe; and the greatest proprietors were obliged to pay *eighty per cent* for the money they were compelled to borrow to meet the requisitions. Prince Czartorinski was obliged to leave Warsaw from absolute inability to maintain his family there; and the Princess Radziwill, wife of the richest noble in Poland, was so reduced, that she could not command money to send home two lady's-maids whom she had brought from France and England: the whole public authorities were six months in arrear of their salaries; and those to whom the great proprietors were indebted, were unable to extract from them a single farthing in payment. In the midst of this universal misery, the requisitions for the Grand Army were incessant; no representations could convince Napoleon of the state of impoverishment to which Poland had been reduced: taxes, at his command,[1] were laid on, but they produced nothing; and moveable columns of troops traversed the country in every direction, seizing without mercy the agricultural produce of the peasants, who were universally reduced to beggary by the exactions![1]

[1] De Pradt, l'Ambassade à Varsovie, en 1812, 84, 89, 184. Oginski, iv. 5.

In the midst of this scene of unparalleled suffering, it was announced to the Abbé de Pradt one morning early, on the 10th of December, that a travelling carriage in great haste had driven into the Hotel

Napoleon arrives at Warsaw.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

d'Angleterre at Warsaw, and that his immediate presence was required. He lost no time in going there, and found in the court-yard a small travelling britschka, placed, without wheels, on a coarse sledge made of four pieces of rough fir-wood, which had been almost dashed to pieces in entering the gateway. Two other travelling-carriages, still ruder in their construction, stood beside it. Caulaincourt speedily appeared, and taking the Abbé by the hand, led him into a small dark apartment, with the windows half-shut, and in a corner of which a servant girl was striving in vain to light a fire with green damp billets of wood. A figure wrapped up in a rich pelisse, was placed with its back to the fire as the Abbé entered; it turned round on hearing the sound of footsteps, and Napoleon stood before him.[1]

[1] De Pradt. 203, 210.

"Ah! is it you, Ambassador?" said the Emperor.

His remarkable conversation with the Abbé de Pradt.

"You have given me much uneasiness," replied the Abbé, with deep emotion; "but I see you well, and I am content." After some further conversation, the Abbé, upon the Emperor enquiring what contributions could be furnished by the Grand Duchy, explained to him the state of destitution to which Poland had been reduced, and the great exertions it had made for furnishings for his army. "What!" rejoined the Emperor, "I have not seen a Pole in my ranks." "There were eighty-two thousand, nevertheless; but they were drowned in the immensity of your Majesty's armament." "What would the Poles be at?" rejoined the Emperor. "To be Prussians if they cannot be Poles? And then, why not Russians?" with a sarcastic air. "Come, Abbé, we must raise ten thousand Polish Cossacks; a lance and a horse are enough for each man. With them we will soon stop the Russians. From the sublime

to the ridiculous is but a step. Dangers! I have seen none of them. I am never so well as in agitation: the greater the tumult, the better I feel. None but the *rois fainéants* grow fat in their palaces. Horseback and camps for me. *From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step.* I see you are all in alarm here. Bah! The army is superb. I have a hundred and twenty thousand men: I have always beaten the Russians; they never venture to stand against me. They are no longer the soldiers of Eylau and Friedland. We will maintain our position at Wilna. I am going to raise three hundred thousand men. Success will embolden the Russians. I will give them two or three battles on the Oder, and in six months I will be again on the Niemen. I have more weight on the throne than at the head of the army: I left the troops, indeed, with regret; but it was necessary, to watch over Austria and Prussia. All that has happened is nothing; it is the effect of the climate, and nothing more. The enemy are nothing: I have beat them wherever I met them. They thought they would cut me off at the Beresina; but I soon got quit of that fool of an admiral, (I never could pronounce his name.) Their position was superb; fifteen hundred toises of a marsh, a river. But what then? I got through them all. It is then you see who have the strong minds. I have often been harder pushed before. At Marengo, I was beaten till six o'clock at night; next day I was master of all Italy. At Essling, they thought they would stop me; that archduke has published I know not what on the subject. I could not prevent the Danube from rising sixteen feet in one night; but for that, it was all over with Austria. But it was written in heaven that I should marry an archduchess.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

Extraordinary ideas which he expressed.

"So also in Russia. Could I prevent it from freezing? They came and told me every morning that I had lost ten thousand horses during the night. Well: a good journey to them. Our Norman horses are less hardy than the Russian; they cannot resist more than nine degrees of cold. It is the same with the Germans. Go and look for the Saxons or the Bavarians. You won't find one of then alive. Perhaps they may say I lingered too long at Moscow: possibly I did so; but the weather was fine, and I expected peace: the winter set in before its usual time. I sent Lauriston, on the 5th of October, to negotiate for peace: I thought of going to St Petersburg; I had time enough to winter there, or in the south of Russia. The King of Naples will hold good at Wilna. Politics are a great drama; he who ventures nothing will win nothing. *From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step.* The Russians have shown themselves: they have clouds of Cossacks; that nation, after all, is something. The crown peasants love the Government; the nobles are mounted on horseback; they proposed to me to declare the slaves free; I would not do so: a general massacre would have followed. I made a regular war on Alexander; but who could have thought they would have struck such a stroke as the burning of Moscow? They attribute it to us, but it was truly themselves who did it. It would have done honour to ancient Rome. I will have nothing to do with the *corps diplomatique.* They are nothing but titled spies sent to send bulletins of what we are about to their courts. I won't go through Silesia — ah, ah! Prussia. *From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step.*" The Emperor ran on in this way for above three hours, during which time the fire, which had at length kindled,

gradually went out, and all in the apartment were perishing of cold; but the Emperor experienced no inconvenience, so completely was his mind absorbed in the subjects of the conversation. At length, it being announced that the carriage was ready, he and Caulaincourt mounted the sledge, and upon the persons present enquiring anxiously for his health, he exclaimed, "I never was better: if I had the devil himself on board, I think I would not be a bit the worse!" With these words he waved adieu to his attendants, set out in his humble conveyance, and was soon lost in the gloom of a Polish winter. In setting off, the sledge was all but overturned by running against the post of the gate of the court-yard of the inn.[1]

[1] De Pradt. 212, 220.

The departure of the Emperor, though a matter of congratulation to the troops, completed the disorganization of the army. The cold increased in intensity as they approached Wilna, and at length reached twenty-six and thirty degrees of Reaumur, corresponding to twenty-eight and thirty-six below zero of Fahrenheit. The officers ceased to obey their generals; the generals disregarded the marshals; and the marshals contested the authority of Murat. The private soldiers, relieved of the duty of preserving the Emperor, forgot every thing but the instinct of self-preservation. The colonels hid the eagles in their haversacks, or buried them in the ground; the officers, who had hitherto marched round that sacred standard, dispersed to attend to their own safety: nothing was thought of in the army but the urgent pangs of hunger, or the terrible severity of the cold. If a soldier dropped, his comrades instantly fell upon him; and, before life was extinct, tore from him his cloak, his money, and the bread which he carried in

Increased severity of the cold, and dreadful sufferings of the troops.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

his bosom: when he died, one of them frequently sat upon his body, for the sake of the temporary warmth which it afforded; and when it became cold, fell beside his companion, to rise no more. The watch-fires at night were surrounded by circles of exhausted men, who crowded like spectres round the blazing piles: as the wood was consumed, they continued to gaze with indifference on the decaying embers, incapable either of rising to renew the fuel, or of seeking another bivouac; and when at length the flames were extinguished, fell dead beside the ashes. The position of these melancholy bivouacs was marked in the morning by the circles of dead bodies which surrounded them, and attested the successive groups who, during the night, had been attracted by their light.[1]

[1] Segur, ii. 403, 410. Lab. 406, 407. Bout. ii. 408. Chamb. iii. 149, 164.

Prodigious losses of the detachments which joined the French army.

In vain numerous detachments joined the army between Smorgoni and Wilna; the terrible severity of the cold, and the sight of the sufferings of the Grand Army, speedily effected their dissolution. The division of Loison, six thousand strong, which marched from Konigsberg to reinforce the army, was almost totally destroyed in a few days, and three skeleton battalions only reached their unhappy comrades. Twenty thousand recruits had joined between the Beresina and Wilna; and yet scarcely forty thousand of the whole troops reached that city, all in the last stage of misery and despair. During this disastrous retreat, the Russians incessantly pressed upon the retiring army. On leaving Smorgoni, their rearguard was attacked by General Tchaplitz, and totally destroyed, with the loss of twenty-five cannon and three thousand prisoners; between Smorgoni and Ochixiany he again came up with the enemy, and dispersed the new rearguard, with the loss of sixty-one pieces of

cannon and four thousand prisoners; and at Medniki he captured sixteen cannon and thirteen hundred prisoners. On the road to Wilna he captured thirty-one pieces, and penetrated into the town, where the French were hardly established; while Platoff proceeded on the road to Kowno, and cut off a whole column of one thousand men, with twenty-eight pieces of artillery.[1] CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

[1] Bout. ii. 407, 408. Lab. 405, 409. Fain, ii. Chamb. iii.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, but attested by the most unexceptionable medical evidence, that during the whole of this dreadful retreat the French, to whom the cold was unusual, bore it better than the Russians; and that of the survivors almost all were Italians or Frenchmen from the provinces to the south of the Loire. "The inhabitants," says Larrey, who was chief physician to Napoleon in the campaign, "of the southern countries of Europe, bore the cold better than the natives of the northern and moister climates—such as the Hanoverians, the Dutch, the Prussians, and the other German people: the Russians themselves, from what I learned at Wilna, suffered more from the cold than the French. Three thousand men, being the best soldiers of the guard, partly cavalry and partly infantry, almost all natives of the southern provinces of France, were the only persons who really withstood the cruel vicissitudes of the retreat. They were the miserable remains of an army of four hundred thousand men, whom the inhabitants of the country had seen defiling over the bridge at Kowno, six months before, in all the pride of apparently irresistible strength."[2]*

[2] Larrey, iv. 111, 114.

* A similar fact has been observed regarding the British troops in India, who in general bear the fatigue of forced marches under the burning sun of that climate better than the native Hindoos, who have been habituated to it all their lives. The reason seems to be the same

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

The troops had hardly begun to taste the sweets of repose, and to refresh themselves from the immense magazines which Wilna contained, when they were roused by the cannon of the Russians, and compelled to hasten their retreat. A helpless crowd rushed out of the gates on the evening of the 10th December, and speedily arrived at the foot of an ascent covered with ice, where the whole remaining carriages of the army required to be abandoned. The equipage of Napoleon, the treasure of the army, the baggage left at Wilna, the trophies of Moscow, the whole remaining artillery, were all left at the foot of that fatal ascent. In the confusion of leaving the city, the Old Guard itself was for a short time dispersed, and the feeble appearance of order hitherto preserved disappeared; but in this extremity, the wonted courage of Marshal Ney was not awanting. He voluntarily hastened to the rear, and out of the confused mass formed a small corps, chiefly composed of the troops recently come up with Loison, with which he arrested the efforts of the enemy. The Russians found in Wilna, besides immense magazines of every description, above fourteen thousand soldiers, and two hundred and fifty officers, who were incapable of marching further, and preferred becoming prisoners of war to a longer continuance of their sufferings.[1]

[1] Lab. 416, 421. Segur, ii. 418, 423. Bout. ii. 411, 412. Larrey, iv. 167.

Passage of the bridge of Kowno.

At length, on the 12th December, the French arrived at Kowno on the Niemen, when three thousand prisoners were taken by Platoff; and on the 13th they passed the bridge, in number about

in both cases; viz. that the inhabitants of the temperate regions of the globe, having their constitutions ripened by a more genial climate, are able to bear the extremes both of heat and cold better than those whose constitutions have been weakened either by the severities of the arctic, or the relaxations of the tropical regions.

twenty thousand, of whom two-thirds had never seen the Krêmlin. Thus, not more than seven thousand of the vast host with which Napoleon passed Smolensko in the beginning of summer, left the Russian territory; and out of five hundred thousand combatants who had crossed the Niemen since June, twenty thousand alone escaped the disasters of the campaign. As the Imperial Guard defiled over the bridge, an old grenadier extended on the ground attracted the attention of his comrades. The crowd respected his undaunted air, his decoration, and his three insignia. With a placid eye he viewed the approach of death, which he felt to be fast approaching; and, disregarding the other passengers and uttering no supplications, he waited till one of his comrades was near, and then, collecting all his strength, he raised himself on his elbow, and exclaimed to the soldier about to succour him, "Your assistance is in vain, my friend: the only favour which I have to request is, that you will prevent the enemy from profaning the marks of distinction which I have gained in combating them. Carry to my captain this decoration, which was given me on the field of Austerlitz, and this sabre, which I used in the battle of Friedland." With these words he expired; and the sabre and cross were carried to the Old Guard, now reduced to three hundred men, but still marching in serried groups, and preserving even unto death their martial and undaunted air.[1]

[1] Lab. 426, 427. Bout. ii. 413. Segur, ii. 430. Chamb. iii. 164.

The heroic Ney still covered the rear when the troops were defiling over the bridge. Four times the rearguard had melted away under his command, and as often his example and activity had re-formed a band for the protection of the army. He arrived

Heroic conduct of Ney on this occasion.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

at Kowno destitute of troops; a few hundred of the Old Guard alone retained the use of their arms, and they were already defiling over the river. Instantly collecting seven hundred fresh troops, whom he found in the town, and planting twenty-four pieces of cannon remaining there on the redoubts, he made good the post during the whole day against the efforts of the enemy. On the following day he still continued the defence; but finding that his troops deserted him, he seized a musket, and with difficulty rallied thirty men to defend the gate of Wilna. At length, when the passage of the troops who could be persuaded to move was completed, he slowly retired through the streets and across the river, still facing the enemy, and was the LAST OF THE GRAND ARMY who left the Russian territory.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 414. Segur, ii. 433, 434. Lab. 428. Chamb. iii. 172, 178.

Appearance of Ney at Gumbinnen after passing the Niemen.

The first place on the German side of the Niemen where any of the persons who had gone across could rest, was Gumbinnen; and General Matthieu Dumas, who had with great difficulty reached that place, in consequence of a malady under which he had laboured ever since leaving Moscow, had just entered the house of a French physician where he had lodged when passing there before on his entrance into Russia, when a man entered, wrapped up in a large cloak, with a long beard, his visage blackened with gunpowder, his whiskers half-burned by fire, but his eyes still sparkling with undecayed lustre. "At last here I am. What! General Dumas, do you not know me?" "No. Who are you?" "I am the rearguard of the Grand Army—Marshal Ney. I have fired the last musket-shot on the bridge of Kowno; I have thrown into the Niemen the last of our arms; and I have walked hither, as you see me, across the forests."[2] With respectful solicitude, Ger-

[2] Dumas, Souv. iii. 485.

eral Dumas received the hero of the retreat; the benevolent host relieved his immediate necessities; and he soon after set out with Dumas, in the calash of the latter, on the road for Konigsberg. 1812.

When the troops, in leaving Kowno, arrived at the point where the passage had been effected five months before; when they beheld those heights, then crowded with splendid battalions, now covered by a miserable band of fugitives, and passed the remains of the bridges, now deserted, which then groaned under the march of glittering squadrons, the magnitude of the contrast, notwithstanding their present sufferings, brought tears into the eyes even of the common soldiers. Casting a last look on the shores of her savage regions—then, so ardently desired; since, the scene of such grievous suffering—they plunged into the forest, and, abandoning every appearance of military order, dispersed like private travellers over the boundless plains of Poland.[1] Terrible contrast afforded to the passage of the same point five months before.

[1] Lab. 427. Segur, ii. 429, 458.

The only corps of the enemy which still remained in Russia, was that of Marshal Macdonald, twenty-nine thousand strong, which was still in the environs of Riga, and that of Schwartzenberg and Regnier, which was in the southern provinces. The design of Kutusoff was to cut him off from the Niemen, and throw his corps back upon the peninsula of Courland, from whence escape, except by sea, was impossible. For this purpose, the corps of Wittgenstein was directed to descend the right bank of the Niemen to Kowno, and move upon Gumbinnen to cut him off from the Vistula; while the garrison of Riga, now considerably reinforced, pressed upon his rear. On the 18th December, Macdonald, who appears to have been totally forgot during the confusion of the retreat, began to retire from Riga; while Operations against Macdonald near Riga.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

the Marquis Paulucci, governor of Riga, detached ten thousand men to harass his retreat. General Diebitch, who commanded the advanced guard of Wittgenstein, advanced so rapidly, that on the 25th he came up with the retiring army, and boldly threw himself, with only two thousand men, between the French troops of Macdonald and the Prussian auxiliaries in his corps, commanded by General D'York, who amounted to eighteen thousand men. The garrison of Riga, pressing him in rear, and the troops of Wittgenstein coming up to separate him from Macdonald, D'York conceived it no longer necessary to risk his army by an adherence to their forced alliance, and on the 30th December signed a convention with General Diebitch; in virtue of which the Prussian troops, to the number of ten thousand, became neutral, and only awaited the commands of the King of Prussia to unite themselves to the victorious Russians. Deprived by this defection of one-half of his troops, Macdonald lost no time in falling back to Konigsberg, which he reached on the 3d January, with the loss, in various skirmishes during his retreat, of fifteen hundred killed and wounded, and above one thousand prisoners. The slowness of Wittgenstein's advance alone, preserved the remains of his corps from total destruction.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 413, 415, 434, 436. Segur, ii. 460.

Schwartzenberg evacuates the Russian territory.

On the other side, Prince Schwartzenberg, learning of the disasters of the Grand Army, and finding that the corps of Sacken opposed to him was strongly reinforced, fell back to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and finally evacuated the Russian territory on the 7th January.[2]

[2] Bout. ii. 445. Segur, ii. 464. Jan. 7, 1813.

On the last day of the year, Alexander addressed from Wilna a noble proclamation to the soldiers, in which, without underrating their glorious exploits,

he ascribed the success which had been attained mainly to the protection of Heaven. "Soldiers! The year is past—that glorious and ever-memorable year in which you have hurled to the dust the pride of the insolent aggressor. It is past; but your heroic deeds will never pass; time will never efface their recollection: they are present in the hearts of your contemporaries; they will live in the gratitude of posterity. You have purchased with your blood the independence of your country against so many powers leagued together for its subjugation. You have acquired a title to the gratitude of Russia, and the admiration of the world. You have proved by your fidelity, your valour, and your perseverance, that against the hearts filled with love to God and devotion to their country, the most formidable efforts of the enemy are like the furious waves of the ocean, which break in vain on the solid rocks, and leave nothing but scattered foam around them. Desirous to distinguish all those who have shared in the immortal exploits, I have caused medals to be struck from silver which has been blessed by our holy church. They bear the date of the memorable year 1812. Suspended by a blue ribbon, they will serve to decorate the warlike breasts which have served as a buckler to their country. You have all shared the same fatigues and dangers; you have but one heart and one will; you are all worthy to wear this honourable recompense; and you will all feel proud of the decoration. May your enemies tremble when they see it on your bosoms. May they know that under these medals beat hearts animated by an imperishable tie, because it is not founded on ambition or impiety, but on the immutable basis of patriotism and religion."[1]

CHAP. LXVII.

1813.

Noble proclamation of Alexander to his soldiers.

Jan. 1, 1813.

[1] Chamb. iii. 169

CHAP. LXVII.

1813.

The scattered troops of the Grand Army continued to retreat through the Polish territory, still pursued by the Russians, who continued to take numbers of prisoners. The town of Konigsberg was speedily filled with sick and wounded men: above ten thousand were soon collected at Konigsberg, almost all of whom fell into the hands of the Russians. The French generals made a vain attempt to rally the troops on the Vistula; but their diminished numbers precluded all hope of maintaining that position. Numbers who had escaped the horrors of the retreat, fell a victim to the sudden change of temperature, and the return to the usages of civilized life which followed their return to Prussia. The shattered remains of the army were collected in Dantzic, to secure that important military position. Thirty-five thousand men, of seventeen different nations, were there assembled, and the remainder fell back to Posen on the Oder. The Russians stopped the march of their troops, already almost exhausted, at Kalisch, in the end of January; and thus terminated this memorable campaign.[1]

Retreat of the remains of the Grand Army to Konigsberg and Dantzic.

[1] Segur, ii. 471, 473. Bout. ii. 417, 420. Fain. ii. 280.

On the 22d December, the Emperor Alexander arrived at Wilna, and hastened to award to the troops the rewards which their glorious services merited. He found the city overwhelmed with prisoners and wounded men; contagious diseases speedily appeared; and the mortality soon became excessive both among the victors and the vanquished. History has not preserved a more noble instance of fortitude and humanity than was exhibited by the Emperor Alexander on this occasion. The condition of the prisoners, till his arrival, was horrible beyond conception. Huddled together in hospitals, without either fire, water, medicines, beds, or straw, they

Arrival of Alexander at Wilna, and horrible state of the hospitals.

lay on the hard floor, often in the last stage of exhaustion or disease. Hundreds, in consequence, died every day, whose bodies were thrown out of the windows into the streets by the soldiers in attendance; but their place was immediately supplied by multitudes of others, who crawled continually into these abodes of wretchedness, often only to draw their last breath within its walls. Hard biscuit was all they had for food; and their only drink the snow which the least injured among them brought in from the streets and courtyards of the buildings. The frightful accumulation of gangrene wounds and expiring sickness; the multitudes who crowded, not only the apartments but even the stairs of the hospitals; and the putrid smell of above six thousand bodies which lay unburied in their vicinity, had engendered a dreadful contagious fever, of which hundreds died every day, and which, for several succeeding years, spread its ravages through every country in Europe.[1]

[1] Chamb. iii. 146, 147. Segur, ii. 467. Oginski, iv. 99, 100.

Into these hidden dens of misery the Emperor Alexander and his brother Constantine immediately entered, on their arrival at Wielmar, on the 22d of December. Profoundly moved by the dreadful spectacle of human suffering which was there exhibited, the Czar immediately took the most efficacious measures to assuage the universal suffering. Without casting a thought upon the consideration that most of these unfortunate wretches had been his enemies, he, along with Constantine, distributed money largely among them. His own physicians, including the able and intrepid Dr Wylie, who never left his person, were sent to make the necessary arrangements for putting a stop to these horrors: out of his own purse, the Emperor discharged a large part of the arrears of pay due to the

CHAP. LXVII. 1812. troops of his enemies, and established vast hospitals in the palaces of the city, where the French sick and wounded were placed beside and equally well treated with the Russian. The dead bodies in the streets were collected and burned; they amounted to the astonishing number of seventeen thousand. The total number consumed there, and brought in from the vicinity, exceeded thirty thousand. The Grand Duke Constantine rivalled his brother in these acts of mercy. Several of the wounded were brought to his apartments, and tended there; and he, in consequence, caught the prevailing epidemic, though the strength of his constitution carried him safely through its dangers. Shortly after, all the sovereigns of Europe whose subjects were lying in the hospitals at Wilna, sent money to the Emperor to relieve their distresses. Napoleon alone, engrossed with the cares of his situation, sent none. Alexander and Constantine, however, were indefatigable in their attentions to the prisoners during several weeks that they remained at Wilna; and the Emperor, on the very day of his arrival, published a general amnesty to the Polish nation for any part they might have taken in the insurrection against his government; terminating thus a campaign of unexampled dangers and glory, by deeds of unprecedented mercy.[1]*

[1] Chamb. iii. 145, 148. Oginski, iii. 99, 100. Bout. ii. 418. Segur, ii. 467. Dec. 22.

From the most moderate calculations, it appears

* The author is happy to be able to confirm the preceding account of the conduct of the Emperor Alexander and the Grand Duke Constantine on this occasion, which is given by all the historians, both French and Russian who have treated on the subject, by the account which he himself received in Paris, in May 1814, from his esteemed friends, Sir James Wylie and Sir Alexander Crichton, physicians to the Emperor, who were engaged with him in these heroic acts of mercy.

that the losses of the French during the campaign were as follows:—

Slain in battle, soldiers,	125,000
Prisoners, generals,	48
——— officers,	3,000
——— soldiers,	190,000
Died of cold, fatigue, and famine,	132,000
Total loss,	450,048
Eagles and standards taken,	75
Cannon,	929 [1]

Losses of the French during the campaign.

[1] Bout. ii. 446.

The number of those who escaped from the campaign were about 80,000; of whom 25,000 were Austrians and 18,000 Prussians; so that the survivors of the proper French army were not above 37,000, out of above 500,000 who entered the Russian territory. The annals of the world afford no example of so complete an overthrow of so vast an armament.[2] *

[2] Bout. ii. 446. Gourg. ii. 199. Chamb. iii. 134.

The losses of the Russians, especially during the advance from Moscow, owing to the severity of the weather, were very great, and almost equalled that of the French. Only 35,000 of Kutusoff's army reached Wilna; and of these, 18,000 were soon laid up in the hospitals. At Kalisch, when the campaign was finished, not more than 30,000 men could be assembled round the headquarters of the Emperor Alexander; but the number rapidly increased by the junction of convalescents, and detachments from the interior.[3]

Losses of the Russians.

[3] Gourg. ii 214. Aperçu sur la Campagne de 1813, 37.

The Russian campaign having been the chief cause of the overthrow of Napoleon's power, and having substituted the colossus of Russian ambition

* "Was there ever any thing like this exhibited in the world before; the remains of 500,000 men, who had crossed the Niemen in such splendid order in June, now recrossed it, pursued by a detachment of cavalry?"—CHAMBRAY, iii. 134.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

for the terrors of French predominance, has given rise to numerous reflections and much party spirit. The partisans of the French Emperor have incessantly urged that the destruction of the armament was solely owing to the severity of the winter; that the Russians were beaten in every encounter, and displayed both less conduct and courage than on former occasions; and that, but for the occurrence of circumstances which human wisdom could neither foresee nor prevent, the triumph of the French arms would have been complete. On the other hand, the adherents of the Bourbons have maintained that the overthrow was mainly owing to the impetuosity and want of foresight of the Emperor himself; that he made no provision for a retreat, and deviated from the fundamental principle of a base in military operations; and that, blindly trusting to his own good fortune, he rushed headlong on destruction, and precipitated his army into the horrors of winter, by obstinately clinging to Moscow, when reason and experience should equally have convinced him that he could not maintain himself in that position.

Reflections on the military causes of this prodigious overthrow.

An impartial review of the circumstances of the campaign, will probably lead to the conclusion that there is some truth and much error in both these sets of opinions.

I. It seems the height of injustice to assert that the Emperor did not display his wonted military talent, and the troops their accustomed bravery, in this expedition. The arrangements made for providing the army during its advance—the minute and almost incredible attention which he paid to details of every description, and in every department[1]—the admirable talent with which he extricated himself from his perilous situation on the Beresina—have

Great ability of Napoleon generally in the campaign.

[1] Gourg. ii. App. p. 220, ad finem.

never been surpassed, and have extorted the admiration and obtained the generous praise of his enemies.[1] In truth, if the expedition failed from any thing imputable to the French, it was the immense extent of the preparations made to secure its success; it being so true, in Montesquieu's words, that "distant expeditions fail from the very magnitude of the measures taken to carry them into execution."

[1] Bout. ii. 405.

Heroic constancy of the Russians.

II. It is equally in vain for the French to deny that the courage and skill of their adversaries were deserving of the highest admiration. To have retreated five hundred miles in front of an army double their own strength, without a single battalion being broken, or a single standard taken; to have rallied the divisions originally separated, and fought a doubtful battle with superior forces in the heart of Russia; to have enclosed the conqueror in an iron circle, and reduced him to the danger of starving in the centre of his conquests; to have driven him to a ruinous retreat in the beginning of winter, and gained to the Russian arms all the advantages of the most decisive success, without the dangers by which it is usually purchased; to have united forces from the extremities of Europe, and brought them to the critical point of the enemy's retreat, at the very moment when he was compelled to pass it,—are achievements almost without a parallel in military enterprise, and certainly without an equal in military success.

III. The attempt so frequently made by the French to throw the disasters of the campaign entirely upon the severity of the climate, is perfectly hopeless, and has, in fact, been abandoned by their ablest military writers.[2] The reasons of this are sufficiently obvious.

[2] Jom. iv. 206.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

1st, Supposing it were true that the immediate cause of the destruction of great part of the French army was the winter of Russia, the question remains — *What compelled them to brave its severity?* to leave the comfortable winter-quarters of Twer, Novogorod, or Kaluga, containing ample cantonments for their whole forces, and a country, according to Napoleon's account, as rich as the most fertile parts of France or Germany,[1] and fall back on the ruined and wasted line of the Smolensko road? If they had really conquered their enemies in every encounter, and vanquished Russia but for the severity of its climate, what prevented them from obtaining the mastery of its resources, and maintaining themselves in the centre of the country, as they had done at Berlin and Vienna in former campaigns, or as the Allies subsequently did at Paris? It is obvious that the fact of their retreating implies the sense of an inferiority in the field, and an inability to maintain their ground before the growing forces of their enemies; and if this retreat was begun at a hazardous time, so much the greater must have been the pressure of that necessity which compelled them to embrace so grievous an alternative.

The severity of the Russian winter will not explain the disaster.

[1] 26th Bull. iv. 146.

2d, The truth therefore being apparent, that it was the superiority of Russia in light troops that rendered any attempt, on the part of the French, to maintain themselves in the interior of the country hopeless and impracticable; the disasters of the retreat were the immediate consequence of the advantages gained by their enemies, and ought in fairness to be ascribed to their conduct. If a seventy-four sends its antagonist to the bottom by a broadside, no one thinks of ascribing the victory to the elements, although the unhappy victims of defeat are swal-

lowed up by the waves—not mowed down by the fire of the enemy. When the Duke of Brunswick retreated before Dumourier, in Champagne, the French were not slow in claiming the credit of the success, though it was mainly owing to the autumnal rains and the dysentery which paralysed their invaders; when Pichegru conquered Flanders and Holland in 1794, the world justly ascribed the triumph to the French arms, though the losses of the Allies were mainly owing to the cold, which was more severe than that which assailed the French army until after the passage of the Beresina;[1] and Napoleon never thought of transferring to the elements the glory of Austerlitz, although, according to his own account, one half of the Russian loss was owing to the breaking of the ice on the lakes, over which their troops were driven by the fire of the French artillery.*

[1] Jom. iv. 181.

3d, The cold of the winter in 1812 was neither premature nor extraordinary till the close of the campaign. Napoleon repeatedly expressed his astonishment in the bulletins at the fineness of the weather in October at Moscow, which he compared to the autumn at Fontainbleau,[2] and the winter was unusually late of setting in. The Russians themselves were astonished at its tardy advance, and began to fear that Providence, out of favour to Napoleon, had deprived them of its powerful aid.[3] The snow did not begin to fall till the 6th November; and before that time, Marshal Davoust's corps alone had lost ten thousand men since leaving Malo-Jaroslawitz from the fatigues of the march;[4] and the stragglers from the army already overwhelmed the rearguard. The cold in Holland in 1795, and in Poland in 1807, was more severe than that of Russia in 1812, till the

The cold was unusually long of setting in.

[2] 25th Bull. iv. 141. 26th Bull. iv. 146. 27th Bull. iv. 147. 29th Bull. iv. 157.

[3] Lab. 241. Segur, ii. 171.

[4] Ibid. ii. 170.

* *Ante*, v. 483.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

troops approached Wilna;[1] and yet no disorder prevailed in the French armies of Pichegru or Napoleon, who kept the field during both these seasons; whereas the French, when they left the Beresina, had lost, since the opening of the campaign, three hundred and fifty thousand men, and seven hundred pieces of cannon; and on the road from Moscow, not less than one hundred thousand, of whom more than half were prisoners of war.

[1] Jom. iv. 118.

4th, The cold was as severe on the Russians as the French, and the diminution of their forces for *present* operations as great from this cause as that of their adversaries. The army of Kutusoff left behind thirty thousand between Malo-Jaroslawitz and Krasnoi, though they were hardly ever engaged with the enemy;[2] and the French themselves admit, that when it arrived at Wilna it was only thirty-five thousand strong,[3] though the loss in the battle of Krasnoi, the only serious action in which it was engaged on the road, was only two thousand men;[4] and it left Malo-Jaroslawitz with at least one hundred thousand combatants.[5] Nor is it difficult to account for so prodigious a loss, when it is considered that the highest medical authority has established the fact, that troops from the south of Europe bore the cold *better* than the Russians themselves, or the Poles, who had been inured to it from their infancy.[6] It is in vain, therefore, to seek for an explanation of the French disasters in a cause which, pressing with equal severity upon both armies, left their relative strength the same as before. Nor can it be alleged that the Russians, by marching over an unexhausted country, suffered less than their adversaries, who moved on the wasted line of their former march; for, if the prisoners of war be deducted, the Russian loss

And it affected the Russians as much as the French.

[2] Bout. ii. 235.

[3] Gour. ii. 235. Chamb. iii. 141.

[4] Bour. ii. 231.

[5] Jom. iv. 171. Bout. ii. 158.

[6] Larrey, Memoirs, vol. iv. p. 111, 114. Bour. ix. 136.

during their march appears to have been *greater* than that of Napoleon himself; and if they did gain an advantage by that circumstance, they owed it to the courage of their armies, or the skill of their generals, which threw their adversaries on that line ten days before the winter commenced.

Napoleon's long stay at Moscow not what ruined him

IV. The conduct of Napoleon in lingering so long at Moscow, has been generally considered as the immediate cause of the ruin of his armament; and, in a military point of view, it has been considered as hardly admitting of defence. It appears from official documents, that, *a month before the commencement of the cold weather*—viz. on *October* 6,—he felt the necessity of a retreat, if the Russians did not make peace; and was already giving orders for the evacuation of the hospitals and the movement of the parks of artillery towards Mojaisk.[1] On the 5th, 6th, 10th, 13th, and 15th of October, orders to that effect were issued to his marshals.[2] Had the retreat commenced at that period, however, there seems no reasonable ground for supposing that its results would have been materially different from what it actually was. The approach of Tchichagoff and Wittgenstein's armies would have rendered his projected winter-quarters at Smolensko untenable; and the army must still have fallen back to the Niemen, harassed and surrounded by the superior light troops of the enemy. The evils of famine, so severely felt on the whole road, would certainly not have been diminished if double the number of mouths had remained to be fed. If the artillery had not been disabled by the perishing of its horses from cold, it would have been as seriously impeded by the impossibility of maintaining them; and if the night bivouacs had not thinned the ranks of the

[1] Gour. ii. 72.

[2] Ibid, ii. 72. Fain. ii. 147.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

French army, they would not have weakened the force of the enemy who was to assail them. The French army lost one-third of its numbers by the march through Lithuania in summer, when the resources of the country were still untouched, the army fresh, and in high spirits before the bloodshed began: what had it to expect in a retreat for double the distance in autumn, over a country perfectly exhausted, with depressed and wearied troops, and a victorious enemy pressing its rear? [Lab. 225.]

On the other hand, the French Emperor had every ground for believing that the occupation of Moscow would terminate the war gloriously for his arms. He had uniformly found that the capture of a metropolis led, sooner or later, to the subjugation of a country; and his former experience of the character of Alexander, gave him no reason to believe that he would be able to resist the force of circumstances which had so often brought Austria and Prussia to submission. It may reasonably be doubted, therefore, whether Napoleon would have judged wisely in commencing his retreat at an earlier period, and thereby throwing away at once the chance which he had, by a protracted stay in the capital, of vanquishing the firmness of the Russian Government. By so doing, he would have certainly incurred the evils of a disastrous retreat, and of a general insurrection against him in Europe, and thrown away the probable chance of a submission which would, during his lifetime at least, place his power beyond the reach of attack.

Burning of Moscow did not occasion it.

V. The conflagration of Moscow, though a sublime example of patriotism by the Russians, cannot be considered as the cause of the ruin of the French. It may have rendered the continued residence of the

army round the Kremlin inadvisable; though we have Napoleon's authority for asserting, that *after* the fire the greater part of the army were still cantoned in Moscow, and amply supplied with furs, provisions, and every species of necessaries, and that the neighbourhood contained two thousand villages and chateaux still in preservation.[1] But, unquestionably, if the French cavalry and light troops had preserved their ascendency in the field, and been able to forage successfully for the army, they might have secured winter-quarters in Novogorod, Twer, or in Kaluga, the centre of one of the richest countries in the world.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

[1] 22d Bull. iv. 111. 21st and 22d Bull. iv. 109, 110. 36th Bull. iv. 145.

VI. It results from these considerations, that the real causes of the disasters of Napoleon were, 1st, His imprudence in advancing so far from the base of his operations, and thereby exposing himself to the hazard of having a temporary disaster converted into a lasting defeat;[2] or, in plain language, in risking his army so far from its magazines, depots, and reinforcements. 2d, His advance to Moscow after the bloody battle of Borodino, and when his cavalry had suffered so severely as to preclude it from taking an efficient part for the remainder of the campaign. 3d, The alarming and extraordinary increas in the Russian light horse from the junction of the Cossacks of the Don, and the approximation of the seat of war to the nomade tribes on the eastern frontier of the empire, which immediately prevented the French from foraging, and threatened their vast army with destruction, from the very magnitude of its own numbers. 4th, The conducting of the retreat by separate corps, with an interval of miles between them, which enabled the Russian army, though not superior in number upon the whole to the accumu-

Real causes, in a military point of view, of the disaster.

[2] Bout. ii. 447.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

lated strength of their enemies, to fall with an overwhelming force on their detached columns, and pass their long line over the sword's edge, without hardly any injury to themselves. If this method of retreating was unavoidable for the supply of the army,[1] it only demonstrates the more clearly the imprudence of advancing such a distance, when no better method of escape was practicable, and the strength of the feeling of inferiority which must have existed to compel so great a captain to hazard it.

[1] Gour. ii. 92.

Of these causes, the most important place, in a military point of view, undoubtedly must be assigned to the immense preponderance which, when the French arrived at Moscow, was obtained by the clouds of light horse who crowded to the Russian standards from the banks of the Don, and the other nomade provinces of the empire. The more that the memorable campaign of 1812 is studied, the more clearly it will appear that this was the real cause of the destruction of the French army, and that it must have proved equally fatal to them, even though Moscow had not been burned, or the frosts of winter had never set in. If a European army advances in good order, forming magazines as it goes, it may doubtless be able to withstand the utmost attacks of the Asiatic cavalry; and it was because they took these precautions that the armies of Alexander and the Romans in ancient, and of the British and Russians in modern times, have so often prevailed over the innumerable swarms of the Eastern horse. But when an army rushes headlong into the middle of the Scythian cavalry without having the means, from resources of its own, of providing itself with subsistence and forage, it is certain to be destroyed. Alexander the Great wisely avoided such a danger, and, contenting himself with a

The Russian light horse was the great cause of his ruin.

barren victory over the Scythians on the banks of the Oxus, turned aside from their inhospitable territory. Darius, with all the forces of Persia, penetrated into it and perished. The legions of Mark Antony and Crassus sunk under the incessant attacks of the Parthian horse; the genius of Julian proved inadequate to the encounter; the heroism of Richard Cœur de Lion was shattered against the innumerable squadrons of Saladin. The very magnitude of the carriages with which a European army invades an Asiatic territory, proves the immediate cause of its ruin, by augmenting its incumbrances, and accelerating the period when, from being surrounded by the light horse of the enemy, it must perish from want. The enterprise of Napoleon against Russia thus proved abortive, from the same cause which, in every age, has defeated the attempts of refined nations to penetrate the Eastern wilds; and it is a striking proof of the lasting influence of general causes on the greatest of human undertakings, that the overthrow of the mightiest armament which the power of civilized man ever hurled against the forces of the East, was in reality owing to the same causes which in every age have given victory to the arms of the shepherd kings.

Want of provision, on Napoleon's part, for a retreat.

Although, however, the great superiority of the Russians in light horse unquestionably was the cause of the inability of the French to remain in the neighbourhood of Moscow, yet the disasters of the retreat would not have been nearly what they were had it not been for the entire want of provisions, on Napoleon's part, for the necessities of a retreat. He had no magazines whatever between Moscow and Smolensko, a distance of about two hundred miles; and accordingly it has been shown that General

CHAP. LXVII. 1812. Barraguay d'Hilliers, who was entrusted with [illegible] ing open that communication, was under the necessity of stopping the convoys on their road to Moscow, in order to subsist his troops.* Immense magazines, indeed, had been collected at Borissow, Minsk, and Wilna, but between them and Smolensko there were none; and of what avail were these great stores in Lithuania, when the army had nearly five hundred miles to march before they could reach them, and when the forces left to garrison the towns where they were placed were so insufficient, that they all fell into the hands of the enemy as soon as they were attacked? How was it possible that any troops, even if the weather had been as fine as possible, could have carried provisions with them for so great a distance, when marching over a country of which the resources had been entirely consumed by the passage of both armies over it in the early part of the campaign? Nay, so far had the Emperor been from anticipating a retreat, that he had not provided any thing for frosting the horses' shoes—a circumstance which was the immediate cause of the ruin of the cavalry, and the necessity for soon leaving so great a part of the artillery behind; and even the bridges which had been broken down in the course of the advance, had not even been repaired when the troops came to them again during their retreat.[1] It is evident, therefore, that Napoleon, spoiled by the successes of twenty campaigns, had anticipated only a residence in the interior of Russia, and had made no provision whatever for a retreat; and to this cause, undoubtedly, great part of the unparalleled calamities in which he was involved is to be ascribed.

[1] Chamb. ii. 392, 395.

* *Ante*, viii. 746.

CHAP. XVII.

1812.

On the other hand, justice requires that due credit should be given to the Russian mode of pursuit by parallel march: a measure which was unquestionably one of the greatest military achievements of the last age. Had Kutusoff pursued by the same road as the French, his army, moving on a line wasted by the triple curse of three previous marches, would have melted away even more rapidly than his enemy's. Had he hazarded a serious engagement before the French were completely broken by their sufferings, his own loss would probably have been so severe as to have disabled him from taking advantage of them. Despair rapidly restores the courage of an army: a disorderly crowd of stragglers often resume the strictest military order, and are capable of the greatest efforts when the animation of a battle is at hand. The passage of the Beresina, the battle of Corunna, the victory of Hanau, are not required to demonstrate this important truth. Well knowing that a continued retreat would of itself weaken his enemies, the Russian general manœuvred in such a manner as, with hardly any loss to himself, to make prisoners above half their army; and that at a time when the storms of winter were making as great ravages in his own troops as in those of his antagonists. Had he not pursued at all, Napoleon would have halted at Smolensko, and soon repaired his disasters; had he fought a pitched battle with him on the road, his army, already grievously weakened by the cold, would have probably been rendered incapable of pursuing him to the frontier. By acting a bolder part, he might have gained a more brilliant, but he could not have secured such lasting success: he would have risked the fate of the empire, which hung on the preservation of his army: he might

Extraordinary ability of Kutusoff's conduct in the pursuit.

CHAP. LXVII. 1812.

have acquired the title of conqueror of N. he would not have deserved that of saviour of his country.[1]

[1] Bout. ii. 450.

But it would have been in vain that all these advantages lay within the reach of Russia, had their constancy and firmness not enabled her people to grasp them. Justice has not hitherto been done to the heroism of their conduct. We admire the Athenians, who refused to treat with Xerxes after the sack of their city, and the Romans, who sent troops to Spain after the defeat of Cannæ: what, then, shall we say of the generals, who, while their army was yet reeking with the slaughter of Borodino, formed the project of enveloping the invader in the capital which he had conquered? what of the citizens, who fired their palaces and their temples lest they should furnish even a temporary refuge to the invader? and what of the Sovereign, who, undismayed by the fires of Moscow, announced to his people, in the moment of their greatest agony, his resolution never to submit, and foretold the approaching deliverance of his country and of the world? Time, the great sanctifier of events, has not yet lent its halo to these sacrifices: separate interests have arisen; the terror of Russia has come in place of the jealousy of Napoleon; and those who have gained most by the heroism of their allies, are too much influenced by momentary considerations to acknowledge it. But when these fears and jealousies shall have passed away, and the pageant of Russian, like that of French ascendency, shall have disappeared, the impartial voice of posterity will pronounce that the history of the world does not afford an example of equal moral grandeur.

Moral grandeur of the conduct of the Emperor and people of Russia.

But all the heroism of Alexander, and all the de-

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER LX.

Note A, p. 71.

Table of the result of Criminal Commitments in Scotland, England, and Ireland, in the years 1832 and 1837.

1832.	Committed.	Convicted.	Acquitted.	Proportions of Convictions to Acquittals.
England,	20,829	14,947	3716	4½ to 1
Ireland,	16,056	9759	2449	4 to 1
Scotland,	2431	1599	64	24 to 1
1837.				
England,	23,612	17,096	4388	4 to 1
Ireland,	14,804	9536	3011	3½ to 1
Scotland,	3126	2358	229	11 to 1

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables for* 1832, pp. 80, 88, *and* 1837, 117, 118.

Note B, p. 73.

Table showing the amount of Bank Notes in Circulation from 1792 to 1815, with the commercial paper under discount at the Bank during the same period, and the gold and silver annually coined at the Bank.

Years.	Total of Notes.	Commercial Paper rendered at Bank.	Bullion coined.
1792,	£11,307,380	£———	£1,171,863
1793,	11,388,910	———	2,747,430
1794,	10,744,020	———	2,558,895
1795,	14,017,510	2,946,500	493,416
1796,	16,729,520	3,505,000	464,680
1797,	11,114,120	5,350,000	2,600,297
1798,	13,095,830	4,490,600	2,967,565
1799,	12,959,610	5,403,900	449,962

Years.	Total of Notes.	Commercial Paper rendered at Bank.	Bullion coined.
1800,	£16,854,800	£6,401,906	£180,937
1801,	16,203,280	7,905,100	450,242
1802,	15,186,880	7,523,100	437,019
1803,	15,849,980	10,747,600	596,445
1804,	17,077,830	9,982,400	718,307
1805,	17,871,170	11,365,500	54,668
1806,	17,730,120	12,380,100	405,106
1807,	16,950,680	13,484,600	None.
1808,	14,183,860	12,950,100	371,714
1809,	18,542,860	15,475,700	298,946
1810,	21,019,600	20,070,600	316,936
1811,	23,360,220	14,355,400	312,263
1812,	23,408,320	14,291,600	None.
1813,	23,210,930	12,330,200	519,722
1814,	24,801,080	13,285,800	None.
1815,	27,261,650	14,917,100	None.
1816,	27,013,620	11,416,400	None.

—Moreau's *Tables, and* Peuber, 279. Marshall's *Digest*, pp. 97, 147, 236.

Note C.

The following was the Evidence given on the subject of the high price of bullion by Mr Chambers, before the Committee of the House of Commons.

In the examination of Mr Chambers, a gentleman who deservedly enjoys the reputation of great intelligence and extensive information in the commercial world, we find the following evidence:—"At the Mint price of standard gold in this country, how much gold does a Bank of England note for one pound represent? Five dwts. three grains." "At the present market price of £4, 12s. per ounce, how much gold do you get for a bank note of one pound? Four dwts. eight grains." "Do you consider a Bank of England note for one pound under these present circumstances as exchangeable in gold for what it represents of that metal? I do not conceive gold to be a fairer standard for Bank of England notes than indigo or broad cloth." Question repeated. "If it represents twenty shillings of that metal at the coinage price, it is not."—Huskisson's *Life*, i. 36. Mr Huskisson adds, in these answers this leading doctrine is manfully and ingenuously asserted and maintained; and all who stand up for the undepreciated value of bank paper, however disguised their language, must ultimately come to the same issue.—*Ibid.*

Note D, p. 97.

Table showing the progress of exports to, and shipping with, the countries with which reciprocity treaties have been concluded, compared with those with whom there have been no such treaties, and the British colonies.

I indulged a sanguine hope, that before this volume went to the press, the valuable returns on this head moved for in the House of Commons in March last, by my esteemed friend J. C. Colquhoun of Killermont, would have been published, and which will throw the most important light upon the erroneous policy which has caused so much

commercial distress in Great Britain for the last twenty years, and the simultaneous causes which have counteracted their effect, arising out of the unprecedented growth of its colonial empire. But the returns moved for have not yet been laid before Parliament; and therefore I am under the necessity of foregoing the pleasure of laying that valuable document before the public in this edition.

Note E, pp. 1—128.

BUDGET OF 1811.

Income, Ordinary.		Expenditure.	
Customs,	£6,802,402	Interest of Debt,	£20,749,828
Excise,	18,489,914	Life Annuities,	1,540,257
Stamps,	5,090,478	Sinking Fund,	13,084,274
Land and Assessed,	6,868,230		
Post Office,	1,274,000	Total of Debt Funded,	£34,374,359
Small Taxes,	87,605	Interest of Exchequer bills,	1,556,753
Total Ordinary Net,	£38,612,629		
Hereditary Revenue,	65,814	Total charge of debts funded and unfunded,	£35,931,094
War Taxes.			
Customs,	£2,633,919		
Excise,	6,410,130		
Property Taxes,	12,941,155	Civil list,	1,472,403
Arrears,	14,336	Do. Scotland,	109,693
Lottery,	281,386	Miscellaneous,	596,549
Proportion of Irish Loan for England,	2,752,796	Navy,	19,540,678
Smaller Sums,	253,806	Army,	23,869 359
	£63,965,990	Ordnance,	4,557,509
English Loan,	16,636,375	Loans to Foreign States,	7,410,039
		Miscellaneous,	1,962,636
Total, Britain,	£81,602,365	For United Kingdom,	£95,450,060
Irish Loan and Taxes,	10,309,000	Deduct for Ireland,	4,489,462
Grand Total,	£91,911,365		£90,960,598

—*Finance Accounts*, *Ann. Reg.* 1812, 398, 409; and *Parl. Deb.* xxii. 1-34, App.

Note F, p. 128

BUDGET OF 1812.

Income, Permanent.		Expenditure.	
Customs,	£8,296,289	Interest of Funded Debt,	£21,361,252
Excise,	17,800,248	Life Annuities,	1,529,655
Stamps,	3,313,986	Management,	233,705
Land and Assessed,	7,373,157		£23,124,616
Post Office,	1,534,608	Sinking Fund,	13,482,510
Smaller Duties,	90,692		
Permanent and Annual Taxes,	£38,408,980	Total charge of Debt funded,	£36,607,126
Hereditary Revenue,	106,630	Interest of Exchequer bills,	1,835,369
War Taxes and Resources.		Total charge of Debt funded and unfunded,	£38,442,495
Customs,	£2,948,330	Civil List, &c.	1,635,601
Excise,	5,204,754	Do. Scotland,	112,748
Property Tax,	13,368,606	Bounties, Pensions, Drawbacks, &c.	582,675
Lottery,	350,145	Navy,	20,500,339
Proportion of Irish loan,	2,703,313	Army,	24,987,392
Exchequer bills repaid,	910,470	Ordnance,	4,252,409
Smaller Sources,	352,931	Foreign Loans,	8,204,023
Total, exclusive of Loans,	£64,446,159	Miscellaneous,	1,779,089
Loans including for Ireland, £4,350,000, East Ind. 2,500,000,	29,268,586	East India Co.'s Loans,	2,498,000
		Advance on Commercial Exchequer bills,	1,675,141
Total,	£93,714,745	Total,	£104,369,887
		Deduct for Service of Ireland,	6,848,516
		Total Expenditure of Great Britain,	£97,521,371

—*Finance Account* for year ending *5th January* 1813; *Parl. Deb.* pp. 2-23, 24; *Ann. Reg.* 1813, p. 328.

Note G. p. 132.

Propositions submitted by Mr Mackenzie, on behalf of the British Government, to the French Government, and rejected by them.

"*Projet d'une convention pour l'échange des prisonniers de guerre, présenté par M. Mackenzie à M. de Moustier.*".

"ART. I.—Tous les Anglais, tous les Espagnols, Portugais, Siciliens, Hanovriens, et autres sujets de, ou au service de, la Grande Bretagne, ou des puissances en alliance avec elle, qui sont maintenant prisonniers de guerre en France, en Italie, à Naples, en Hollande, ou dans tout autre pays en alliance avec, ou dependant, de la France, seront relâchés sans exception.

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